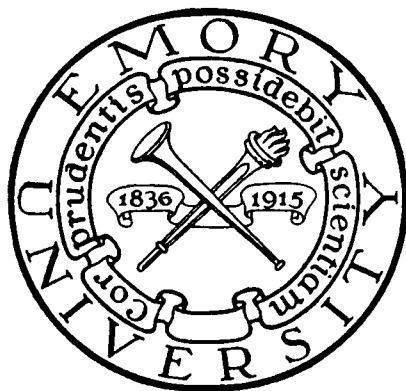


THE WAIF
FROM
THE WAVES

Knox Little

ROBERT W WOODRUFF
LIBRARY



THE

WAIF FROM THE WAVES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE BROKEN VOW. *Seventeenth
thousand.*

THE CHILD OF STAFFERTON.
Fourteenth thousand.

THE WAIF FROM THE WAVES

A STORY OF THREE LIVES

TOUCHING THIS WORLD AND ANOTHER

BY

W. J. KNOX LITTLE

CANON RESIDENTIARY OF WORCESTER AND VICAR OF HOAR CROSS

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, LTD.

1894

[*All rights reserved*]

Dedication.

I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE STORY
TO
FRANK
IN MEMORY OF SUNNY DAYS
AT
PORTO FINO, ARLES, AND AVIGNON
AND
ON THE CORNISH COAST.

PREFACE.

THE following story is the third of a sort of tiny *trilogy*, of which "The Broken Vow" and "The Child of Stafferton" form the preceding two.

Like them it is a trifling tale, the composition of which has been an amusement and a rest in the midst of graver work. Like them it is, of course, a romance. Like them also, it represents facts in the deeper experience of life.

Faults were found—not unnaturally—by some who took notice of the former little stories—which perhaps may be found, by the same class of critics—if they notice my little book at all—with this. That is inevitable. Still so many have, privately or publicly, been kind to my former slender efforts—have been so good to Lady Dorothy and Lady May—that I am in hopes *they* may have a generous feeling for "My Little Lettice," and may find in her story something to cheer them, or while away an idle hour.

Anyhow, I shall not feel—any more than I did before—that stray hours have been wasted—which otherwise might have been full of weariness or sorrow—in writing this little story, if for some I succeed, in

it, in giving a deeper sense of the beauty of real love, the sweetness of simplicity, straightforwardness and courage, the nobleness of constancy, the glory of goodness, the reality of unseen things, and the power of repentance in bringing labouring souls nearer to the Light of Life.

W. J. KNOX LITTLE.

The College, Worcester.

September 4th, 1893.

PRELUDE.

I INTRODUCE the following story to my readers because it had a special interest for myself. I do not suppose that the story itself or this preface of mine will meet the eye of any except such as are immediate friends of the various persons concerned, just now, and perhaps not until *we* are all in our graves. I think it is an interesting story, however, and I have leave from those who have a right to give it, to preface it, for any who may care to be made acquainted with it, in my own way.

I am May Durrell, only daughter of Sir William Durrell, Bart., of Stafferton, and Lady May,—the romantic history of whose early lives is recorded in “The Child of Stafferton.” Among my mother’s many friends, there are three families with whom she has always maintained the closest and most affectionate relations. One of these is the Ravensthorpes, and the other two are the Ferrers of Markland Priory and the Trelormans of Markland Hall. Everyone who is the least likely to be interested in us and our affairs, is sure to know the touching story of the beautiful Lady Dorothy, mother of the present Lord Ravensthorpe, and they are equally sure to know a great deal about the story of my own dear father and my own sweet mother—Sir William Durrell and Lady May. What they are not likely to know, un-

less they read the following story, is the equally strange and touching history of our dear friends at Markland. Whether the four families are peculiarly oppressed with superstition—as I daresay some people would think—or whether these “some people” are only a little stupid themselves, and facts of another world are not always so hidden from us mortals as is sometimes imagined, it is not my business to decide ; but there is no doubt that in all three cases those most concerned went through striking episodes in their lives, and those episodes connected themselves much with another world.

I and my brother had often asked our father to give us a full account of what I may call the Mystery of Markland, for indeed there was *real* mystery—and I am not merely playing with the sensational in speaking of it in this way. I knew that Lettice—the daughter of Sir Ralph Ferrers—who had stayed with us at Stafferton, had been somehow or another the heroine of it before her marriage, and that it had chiefly to do with herself and her husband. When she was with us here I thought her the most beautiful creature I ever saw ; it was not so much her features which struck you—although they were fine and delicately chiselled—but the expression of her face. When it was quiet it set you dreaming, it seemed to suggest such depth of character, and when she was touched by anything that pleased her, it broke into such a sunshine of smiles ! She was what people would call dark, I suppose, for she had piles of that sort of golden brown hair which Aunt Dorothy says was so beautiful in *her* mother, and her eyes were

a deep hazel, but her complexion was as fair as enamel and her lips red. She had a graceful figure, and walked with a springy step. I think the charm about her was her decision of character, her entire simplicity and—what I may call—her *evenness* of character. You always knew “where to find her.” In many ways she reminded me of my own sweet mother, although they were really quite different in a hundred things ; I suppose what I mean about them both is the fact of their genuine reality. I don’t know why I have been writing in the past tense, except that my mind has been wandering back to Lettice’s first visit to Stafferton, for really she is just the same now only a little older. As for her husband, he is the most delightful creature in the world, a thorough sailor, and even now quite like a boy ; and I defy anybody in their senses to avoid falling in love with him.

The reason why my interest and my brother’s had been stirred about the Markland story was this. In the gallery of Stafferton we have a considerable collection of pictures of various kinds. My father himself, as everyone knows, was half Italian, and had pronounced artistic power ; but above all, like his father before him, he possessed the peculiar gift of a portrait painter, and I suppose he possesses it still, although—from the many calls upon his time—he does not do much in that way now, and he declares that he never had sufficient training in the right use of colour. Whether or not his colouring is perfect of course I cannot say, but any one who looks at his portraits can see plainly enough that he has succeeded

again and again in *catching* the mystery of characteristic and varying expression which gives real life to a human face. There is one large portrait in the gallery at Stafferton painted by him, and painted with the utmost care. He himself always thought that it was the best likeness he had ever done, except indeed that portrait of my mother, done by him in Rome before they were married, which made him famous, and which was called "The Lyric Love." This other to which I refer is very different. It is a portrait of a young man dressed in the costume of an Italian *pifferaro*. The figure is of moderate height and strongly built. The face could scarcely be called handsome in the strict sense of the term, for the features are somewhat irregular, but there is about it that strange fascination which comes from an interior light in the soul, from a simple and manly heart, and from a character of combined strength and tenderness, which is more in real beauty than that which is called strictly handsome. The forehead is high and white; the eyes large and grey, with that dark look in the pupils which indicates an easy tendency to dilate and contract unexpectedly; the lashes long and black; the eyebrows arched and exactly pencilled; the lines about the mouth firm; the red lips slightly parted, and giving a hint of the possibility of breaking suddenly into a sunlight of smiles, and the masses of black curly hair just hinted at from beneath the picturesque cap of the Italian peasant. Over the whole picture there is an air of grace and refinement, and even though you are drawn to it by that most forcible attraction, the sense of being in the presence

of a pure and strong and sunny soul, yet the predominating tone is unquestionably one of sadness, and it is this which startles you into the feeling that about that life there hangs some interesting mystery.

This was the portrait of Henry St. Aldham, Viscount Markland, only son of the Earl of Trelorman. He had been my father's fast friend in early days, and moreover there was a certain similarity in the romance of the lives of both of them which certainly touched my father's imagination.

There are few things more really interesting I think—though this may be considered a purely feminine idea—than the ins and outs of family chronicles. The history of any soul, if it can be carefully traced, is generally a romance of joy or sorrow ; but there are some families in whose fate Fortune seems to have taken a delight in playing off some of her strangest freaks. Everybody, as I have said, knows the touching story of the Ravensthorpes and their beautiful grandmother, Lady Dorothy, recorded in "The Broken Vow." The vicissitudes through which my own father and mother have passed in their earlier days have been chronicled, as I have reminded my readers, in the story of "The Child of Stafferton," and now there is this third romance of real life belonging to these dear friends of ours, and which at last came to my knowledge in the following way. My father had often laughed at my brother and myself when we questioned him about his Italian *pifferaro* in a way that put us off and stimulated our curiosity, by assuring us that it was too long, too romantic and too ghostly a story to be told without expending too

much time and pains, and the reason—so he said—why he never could be induced to grant my request was this, that for a long time his own lips had been sealed as to much that he really knew about it himself ; that other details which were essential to a knowledge of all, had not been known to him at first hand ; that an old lady in the neighbourhood of Markland, who had had much to do at critical points with the development of the events, had promised to get the story written down ; that that manuscript, when it was completed, he would place in my hands ; and that to attempt to tell me the story before I had read the manuscript would only be to spoil the whole thing.

With this I have been, up till now, obliged to be content, for although my father is as kind as man can be, when he has thoroughly made up his mind on any point that is an end of it.

However the time came when my wish was gratified, and it fell out in this way : Those who have read “The Child of Stafferton,” will not have forgotten *that* Lady Dorothy, who was so close a friend to my father and mother in their early days. In later times, I need hardly say, she has been much with us in Stafferton. The boys love her and so do I, and we always call her “Aunt Dorothy,” although I do not think she is really related to us at all. Her imperturbable good temper, her downright manner, her rough-and-ready sort of ways, by which she vainly attempts to conceal the ready sympathies of a very tender heart, together with her entire devotion to myself and my brothers, to say nothing of her enthusiastic love for my mother and father, make her the

idol of the house, and when Aunt Dorothy is with us we are always happy. Now it so happened that I had not been very well, and not very long ago, Aunt Dorothy, who is always roving, got a good excuse for carrying me off from the school-room and taking me with her to get some sea-air on the Cornish coast. Our head-quarters were to be at Markland Hall. I was sorry to think that Lettice was not likely to be there, as they had gone abroad ; but I was glad to get the chance of seeing the place, and determined, if possible, to learn all about the mystery about which my father refused to speak.

“ I shall introduce you, May, dear,” said Aunt Dorothy, “ to old Miss Martha Ferrers. She is a charming old lady, worth knowing on her own account, but besides that, she might perhaps allow you, if you can only get at her soft side, to read the story, which I know by her own wish, Lettice has written about the mysterious matters at Markland, before she married Harry. You remember that *pifferaro* picture about which you were always bothering your father ? well, if you read Lettice’s manuscript it will be all quite clear.”

It was early in October when Aunt Dorothy and I set out on our travels. She had been to Ravensthorpe for the “ Angels’ Festival,” for it has become a religious obligation with all the members of that family to assemble there if possible then. I joined her at York. We stayed at Salisbury, for I wanted to see the glorious cathedral and to visit George Herbert’s home at Bemerton, and it was about the middle of the month when we reached Markland.

Markland Hall is one of those stately houses which cannot fail to impress you by its dignity. It is nothing like so perfect as Ravensthorpe, for it has been added to and altered so many times, and the front is not nearly so beautiful as Stafferton. It is, however, a great deal larger than either, and quite marvellously rambling. You approach it by a long straight avenue, ascending by a steady slope from the woods below. The trees break off as you near the house, and there are sweeps of smooth green lawn ; then a bridge as old as the Tudors crosses a moat, which is a moat where the water is constantly though slowly in motion, and beyond the bridge a great arched gateway under a central tower. Inside the gate is a regular courtyard, which is so large that it is never gloomy, and gave me the feeling as I entered it of being in one of the colleges of our old universities. On the right, as you enter the main courtyard, is another arched gateway, not quite in the centre either, of the buildings by which there is entrance to another courtyard. This is smaller than the first, later in date, and of extraordinary beauty. It seems to have been built in the early days of Henry VII.'s reign, and its roof supplies patterns of the most exquisite chimney work in England, unsurpassed I should think, unless perhaps at Compton Winyatts. From the first courtyard you can pass across the moat at the back by a drive which curves to the right, and leads to the stables. These are modern, and more or less hidden in the last mass of wood which extends behind the house ; but the striking feature in the whole pile of buildings is this, from the back of the second court

and at the other side of the moat there stretches a long line of buildings in the direction of the stables, and separated from the path which leads to them. These buildings are the most ancient at Markland, and their connection with the second courtyard is by a bridge thrown up from one building to another, after the manner of the bridge at Venice. Just where this line of buildings touches the moat, there rises at the angle a lofty tower, so lofty as far to overtop the solid tower by which the first court is entered, and to command a sweeping view of the surrounding country and the sea.

For Markland Hall stands within earshot of the roar of the Atlantic. The ground from the park gates right down in the valley ascends with a steadily increasing gradient, until you reach the platform on which the house stands. The woods are thick and luxuriant in the hollows, and in the spring-time there is in them a wealth of wild flowers, and in the autumn they are rich with the bracken in its russet brown; and the deer find plenty of shelter under the great oaks, as the oaks themselves find plenty of shelter under the rising cliffs, but as you near the hall the trees show a steady tendency to bend eastward and southward, and the topmost foliage is *burned*, if one may say so, by the north-west wind; and the circling clouds of rooks prefer for the most part to wheel about in the lower woods, and the more nearly you approach the Hall you feel, before you can see a sign of it, that you are approaching the sea. Behind the mass of buildings the woods cease altogether, except for some weary, patient, suffering clumps

of trees round the stables, which are lashed and scourged by the gale.

Walk directly up the slopes of grass which lie behind the ornamental metal gates that guard the flower-beds at the back, and before very long a dip in the cliffs on the left shows you a long stretch of shining sea ; go higher still and crossing a gravel path which, within the circuit of the park, leads round the headland, you are startled to find yourself on the very edge of threatening crags. In front stretches the wide expanse of the open ocean ; behind, the long expanse of grassy slope, then the great Hall on its artificial, flattened platform, with its commanding watch-tower emerging from the trees ; below, the stately woods and sheltered valleys, and to right and left, peak after peak of outstretching headland and curve after curve of receding creek. Following the path from Markland Head to southward, the coast-line dips and then rises again to the height of another headland. Within a dozen yards or more of the edge of this cliff stands the old church of Markland. The churchyard stretches round it, and is guarded on the side towards the sea by a low stone wall, which nature has welded together on the land side with masses of moss and lichen. The churchyard is rich in tombstones of all kinds, flat slabs, and old brown crosses—and the dead lie undisturbed, with the open heaven above them, except for the song of the sea-birds, and the roar of the billows, and the wailing of the wind. Looking over the sea-wall, however, the traveller discovers that the Church Cliff, as it is called, is not the outermost point of land in that direction ; beyond it, seaward, lies a mass of rock

ending in a high point which confronts the waves. This rock would have been an island but for a natural bridge which joins it to the Church Cliff and which is reached by two narrow paths, one descending from the churchyard wall in almost precipitous zigzags, and one winding from the eastward along the cliffs at about half distance from the summit and the sea. This island-like promontory is called Monk's Island and the forward eminence which ends it towards the ocean is called the Monk's Crag.

Descending from the churchyard further south, the path leads the traveller into a deep creek, in which, sheltered under overhanging cliffs and close upon the edge of the sea, lies the little fishing village of Markland. The houses run irregularly along a semi-circular road, defended in front by a sea wall, and boats of all kinds are dragged up almost into the street during the rougher times of winter, or heave about in the quiet little harbour, and bask like lazy birds in the sunlight in the summer days.

From the centre of the village street up through a narrow gorge which separates the cliffs, there runs a road ascending towards the uplands ; beside the road on your right hand as you ascend there runs a noisy stream descending towards the sea. Along the banks of the stream immediately where the curve gives shelter by the cliffs, there are stately trees and all the appanage of spring decoration—flowers and bending grasses, and sheltering shrubs, and ferns and bracken—which belongs to an English woodland dell. About half a mile from the village, an old stone bridge crosses the stream to the right of the traveller ascending, and the road which crosses it skirts along a high

old-fashioned wall upon its left, evidently built to protect some stately grounds within, and travelling up this road you find yourself unexpectedly close to great iron gates, hung on brown pillars surmounted by griffins holding shields; and looking through the gates still to your left, you see the long and beautiful façade of an old English mansion not a day younger as it stands than the latter part of the fourteenth century.

This is Markland Priory. The Priory stands on a sort of triangular piece of land, the base of which is formed by the building itself and the apex by the meeting of the stream and the road which crosses the bridge. The house consists of two wings standing at right angles to one another; the shorter one forms the frontage which we have noticed as seen from the great gates, and is finished at either end by two prominent gables jutting out from the flat. The other wing is longer, and looks down towards the valley and the sea. It is a magnificent piece of old middle-age masonry, curiously uninjured by time or change. In front is a broad terrace guarded by stone balustrades; from this there falls, at the end near the road, broad flights of steps to another terrace, and then another flight to another still, and at length the lower level is reached and the remaining ground below is a quaint old-fashioned garden with yew hedges and stiff walks. Some splendid trees rise up at either end; their feathering tops could be touched by the hand as one leans over the balustrade of the upper terrace of all, and looks down on the wealth of leaves and flowers which in

spring and summer-time meet the eye on every level of the descending staircase.

Behind the Priory, in the angle formed by these two wings, there is a stretch of smooth grass in which in spring and summer there are beds of brilliant flowers. A fountain fills the centre, and on the hot evenings of August you hear the quiet plash, almost the only sound in the dreamy house. Open the gate beyond this grassy courtyard, you find yourself in a quaint old-fashioned garden stretching behind the Priory on the level land and sheltered by various trees. This garden towards the west ends in a low broad wall, and on the garden side of it a wide walk, one end closed by the woods which divide the place from the stream, and the other terminated by the quaint gable end of the façade. Lean over this wall and you see all the descending terraces described above, the old garden at their feet, and beyond, the break in the cliffs and the red roofs and the curling smoke of Markland village, and then the wide stretch of cloud-swept or shining sea. This walk is called the Prior's Walk, and would you enjoy the dreamy hours of a summer evening or the delirium of the storm towards the close of a winter day, the Prior's Walk is the place to find them, in its deep seclusion and yet commanding position, ministered to by gardens and woods and stream and distant cottages and rocks and sea.

Markland Hall, and Markland Church, and Markland Priory, and the little village and the wind-swept gash of the cliffs—these are the scene of a great part of our story.

Markland Hall and Markland Priory had been religious houses in the past. The Hall, though altered now in many respects, had been an abbey of considerable importance at the time when monastic institutions in England came to an end. What is now known as the Priory had probably been an affiliated house at some time or other; but long before the suppression, it had in some way or other been granted to, or settled upon, the Ferrers of Penarmon. I do not know how they got that name, but ever since, I suppose, they first settled in the west, they have been as often spoken of in Cornwall as the "Penarmons" as by their actual name of Ferrers. Somehow or another they were always on good terms with the Abbey, and the family seem to have had a quasi "religious" character.

It is said that the ejection of the monks from the Abbey had been effected with even more than the ordinary brutality and injustice which marked the action of Henry VIII. and his despicable creature—Cromwell. Tradition asserted that the last of the superiors of the Great Monastery had been hounded to his death by the ruffianly bands whom Cromwell led to do his bidding. It was believed in the countryside that he had been driven to the cliffs on the rocky peninsula beyond Markland Head and flung into the sea. What the truth may have really been it is hard to say, but the pointed rock from which the unfortunate abbot was said to have met his death has ever been known as the Monk's Crag. Men said that many misfortunes had beset the family who owned the confiscated lands, and that again and

again the frightened fishermen had seen on certain stormy nights the shadowy figure of a monk on the headland—with hands now clasped in entreaty, now raised in denunciation—rise up in deeper blackness than the darkness of the stormy sky, and that when the wraith was seen, some strange misfortune followed to the owners of the Hall.

The Priory of Markland had, as I have said, long before those days, been in the hands of the ancient family of Ferrers. In consequence, perhaps, of many kindnesses shown by this family—who were not altogether well affected towards the king—to the banished community, their peace and happiness had been much disturbed. They managed, however, to avoid any open rupture with authority, and although robbed and impoverished by court favourites, they never lost the Priory and, at least, part of the lands connected with it. A real tradition of religion seemed to live in the family. They had always been faithful Catholics, and when the final rupture came with Rome at a later time, they still remained faithful to our own part of the Catholic Church, and would have nothing to do with the intrigues of the Roman Court, although they often ran great risks in sheltering persecuted priests at a time when things were in such confusion that it was difficult for Catholics to know exactly where they were. They had been equally faithful in resisting Puritan innovations and maintaining a steady dislike to Protestant superstitions. Though they were nothing like so wealthy or so prosperous in some ways as the St. Aldhams, to whom Markland Hall had been granted, they had

always had a much greater influence in the neighbourhood, and especially among the poor of the fishing villages. For the Ferrers of Penarmon had been there for ever ; they were as much an obvious necessity to the fishermen at Markland as the ocean itself. The property had descended steadily from father to son, and among them there had always been sailors. For the first time for generations, when this story begins, there was no heir at the Priory, for Lettice Ferrers was Sir Ralph's only child.

The St. Aldhams of Markland Hall had a very different record. Their property was immense and their wealth considerable, but the tenure of their possessions had not been altogether happy. Long ago, the head of the family had first of all been made Viscount Markland and then afterwards Earl of Trelorman. Somehow, whatever happened, they always seemed to be on the winning side in politics, and yet in other ways misfortune seemed to dog their steps. It was said that in each generation there had been some saddening catastrophe. Sometimes the eldest son had died before attaining manhood ; sometimes the possessor of the place had himself met with a violent death ; sometimes their lives had been embittered by the undutifulness of their children. The Earl of Trelorman who was living when Lettice's story begins, had certainly not been a happy man, and his son, Lord Markland, the *pifferaro* of my father's portrait at Stafferton, had had a saddening story.

Somehow or another for generations there had been a kind of traditional coldness between the

family of the Priory and the family at the Hall, and there was a prophecy repeated again and again among the fisher-folk of the village, that there could be no happiness at Markland Hall, until Markland Priory were united to it by the ocean. This was expressed in the popular distich, well known in the country side, which ran as follows :—

“And shall the curse for sin and wrong
Removéd from Trelorman be ?
Only when in the closest bond
Penarmon joins them from the sea.”

It was an odd prophecy, and no one had a notion what it meant, but it had its meaning, and for me and for many others who really believed that this world and another are closely bound together, the following story is interesting as it shows *how* that prophecy came true.

.

I shall never forget our arrival at Markland Hall. It was early in an October afternoon. The woods were splendid with the colouring of a gentle autumn, the deer were browsing quietly in the park, or bounding away scared by the sound of our approach through the fading bracken. The rooks were circling above the woods, and there was that strange stillness in the air which only comes in early autumn when Nature seems to pause and dream a sad farewell to the dying summer. The grand old pile of buildings, as we approached, seemed to stand out with preternatural clearness against the cliffs and trees. The flower-beds were still bright, although with some-

what fading colour, as no frost had touched, as yet, with nipping finger a single flower. The house had all that solemn calm of a dwelling where the inmates are no longer by to breathe life into the mystery of home. Not a sound could be heard, but ever and anon the smothered dash of waves, when the ocean swell broke upon the distant crags. To tired travellers there could not be imagined a more peaceful or more stately place of rest after a weary day.

We had a pleasant evening. Every care had been taken for our comfort, and Aunt Dorothy—who was always the most delightful of companions—was in her cheeriest mood as we sat by the fire in a snug little drawing-room after our dinner in a very stately dining-room. She half scared me by her mysterious allusions to ghostly visitants known to have haunted staircases and chambers in the past. She declined entirely to spoil the story by letting me into the secrets to be revealed to me by-and-by, but tried to reassure me before retiring to rest in the great lonely house, by declaring that the ghostly beings who once had made the house uncanny were all laid to their rest. I slept uneasily, and dreamt of monks driven from their home and standing by me in warning or entreating mood; but woke to find a blaze of sunlight worthy of a real summer morning, and to hear the distant soothing sound of the restless sea.

That afternoon we walked along the cliffs, visited the church, and felt reviving life from the ocean breezes, and at last reached the Priory, where we were to make our visit to Miss Martha Ferrers. The

room in which she sat was, I suppose, the library. It was not very large, but the walls were lined with really beautiful old oak bookcases filled with books in ascending grades—fine heavy folios to smaller volumes. The shelves rose even above the broad oak mantelshelf. A bright fire burned in the fireplace, and opposite was a long deep window with stone mullions, the upper flights of which were filled with coats of arms, evidently of great antiquity. The window commanded the terraces and gardens described above, and from it were visible some of the red roofs of the village cottages, and glimpses of the sea.

Miss Martha rose from a high old-fashioned chair placed by the window so as to command the view, and laid down the book she had been reading. She was a sweet old lady of about seventy-five or eighty, as I supposed. She was of rather more than middle height, but so erect in her carriage, she looked taller still. She was dressed with quaker-like simplicity. She wore a plain black silk gown, and from her shoulders fell a soft white shawl. Her hair was snowy white,—white as the simple cap which partly covered it. Her face was lined with marks of years; the forehead was broad, the mouth firm, the eyes large and dark grey, but both in eyes and lips there came, with the smile that broke from them to welcome us, a look of inexpressible sweetness. I never saw a complexion of such transparent whiteness. It gave her an ethereal look, and in a moment you felt yourself before a soul of unearthly goodness. It was not only that she was evidently what I may

call a sweet old gentlewoman, but there was a calmness and a look of interior peace which one dreams of in the saints. Her gentle and yet stately old-fashioned *manner* was perfect, with that perfection which comes from the absence of anything studied—from that sweetest of all things, entire simplicity of character united with real spiritual strength. *Such* perfection of manner I never remember to have been struck with before. It is a *manner* which, by the magnetism of its self-forgetfulness, makes you entirely at your ease, by compelling you—all English self-consciousness notwithstanding—to lose your awkward egotistic *mauvaise honte* at once. I could not but notice her hands, which were small and pearly white and beautifully formed, and even though showing the worn look of years, full of nervous life. They were set off by little soft white frills of muslin coming over them slightly from under the black silk sleeves. There was soft muslin round the throat, and I noticed that she wore on her breast a plain silver cross, hung by a simple chain.

After some conversation on our journey, and inquiries for my father and mother, and all at Stafferton and Ravensthorpe, Aunt Dorothy, in her usual blunt way, stated plainly the reason of our visit, and my great desire to be the privileged reader of the chronicle of Markland. Miss Ferrers seemed prepared for the request.

“It is ready,” she said, “at last—Lettice’s little story. She is not used to writing narratives, but your father begged me to persuade her to do it, and Trelorman made no objection. You are fond of

these old family stories ? ” she added, addressing me, with a touch of doubt in her voice.

“ Fond of them ? ” cut in Aunt Dorothy, “ my dear Miss Martha, would she be her father’s daughter if she were not ? The girl knows *Dugdale’s Monasticon* by heart, and she is longing for tragedies of monkish sorrows.”

“ Dear Aunt Dorothy,” I said with some confusion, “ how can you ? ”

“ Well never mind,” said Miss Ferrers, smiling gently ; “ it is no tale of monasteries, indeed, nothing can be more unlike monastic life. I don’t think Lettice has touched upon anything of that sort unless under that head you reckon her account of one clergyman who is certainly not a monk ; but it is a simple story which chiefly touches three lives ; that of dear Lettice herself, that of her husband, and that of the late Lady Trelorman, for whom Lettice for long had the strongest affection, which she cherishes now for her memory I was never able to share that affection,” added the old lady in a somewhat determined, although not a severe voice ; “ but I am sure sweet Lettice was right, for she certainly altered that poor woman’s life, and the story, though a simple one, touches many sins which were sad and terrible ; but it throws light upon the unseen world, which now-a-days ”—and there was a soft sadness in her voice when she said it—“ people seem so ready to forget. I think it is a touching and interesting story of great love and goodness. To me there is only one drawback in it, and that is, that she has allowed herself to speak too much and too lovingly

of myself. She makes me out much better than I am, but I put all that aside, feeling that it is only an evidence of my dear child's loyal love. I think you will find that she has told, in a simple, straightforward way, what she knew about herself and about some who are gone, and about some who are with us still. I think," she added, in a gentle, solemn tone, turning to me, "you will find, my dear child, that, with whatever absence of literary pretension the story is told, it is a remarkable one, and perhaps it may help you to feel how true it is that 'The Lord is mindful of His own,' and that sin is terrible and that goodness is beautiful, and that if we sin, it is in repentance and restitution that we find the way of peace."

There was something extraordinarily solemn and attractive in the look of the dear old lady as she sat in her high-backed chair, and spoke in a voice feeble with age indeed, but of silver clearness, and purified by the kindness of a strong and gentle soul.

Aunt Dorothy and I felt a little awed, I think, and hushed, as you do in the presence of the Holy Sacrament, or face to face with a saint. The old lady rose up, and opening a desk that stood hard by, she took out a manuscript, written in a pretty, girlish hand.

"This is very precious to me, my dear," she said, "for my beloved Lettice has been all the world to me; but I will lend it you, and you shall read it while you are at Markland, for *there* it will be most interesting to you. I know you will give it safely back to me, and meantime, if you are kind enough to take

the trouble to copy it, I shall be grateful to you ; for I promised your father to allow him to read it, and I have never liked—selfishly, I am afraid—to send it far away.”

I thanked her warmly and assured her the manuscript should be safe in my keeping, that I felt honoured at being allowed to make a copy of it, that I was sure my dear father would enjoy reading it, although I supposed that he knew the main part of the story, and that it would be delightful to me to read the book at Markland, and to return it before we left.

In the still autumn days—for the weather was beautiful—I read and re-read the story, sometimes not without tears. It was delightful to me because it was so *near*. Of course, I am a good deal younger than Lettice, but still she is not very old, and I remember her quite young. Then besides, I was able to examine some of the scenes where the story lies, and as these things happened only the other day, I seem to live *in* them. Ever by me, too, was the sympathetic kindness of Aunt Dorothy and the sense of the soothing and elevating presence of that dear old Miss Martha down at the Priory, who seemed herself to be living in a great measure across the grave. I can't help hoping that some day or other many more may be allowed to read the story, and that “*The Waif from the Waves*”—as Lettice calls it,—may help others as it has helped me to realize a little better the horror of sin, the danger of worldliness and pride ; the beauty of goodness and love and pity, and the nearness and reality of another world.

THE WAIF FROM THE WAVES.

PART I.

I.

I, LETTICE, who write this story at the request of my dear aunt, am the sole surviving child of Sir Ralph Ferrers, Bart., of Markland Priory. In the story which I am about to tell, I cannot help in one sense being the heroine, but I hope to interest my readers much more in the hero, and in another who greatly interested me. It will be necessary, however, to speak a good deal about myself, for otherwise, I would find it impossible to make things plain.

My mother died when I was young, and I have only very dim recollections—if they are recollections at all, and not mere fancies—of one whose memory was ever cherished in our home, and especially by my father with an undying tenderness. I have ever felt as if I had known my mother, better than in reality could have been the case, for her beautiful face, with its firm and gentle expression and laughing eyes, has looked out upon me all these years from her noble portrait in the entrance hall at the Priory, and now hangs in my own sitting-room in my later home. I do of course, remember many little incidents

of my early years, and I have imagined that I have a dim idea—though I suppose this *is* imagination, as I could not have been quite two years old at the time—of the birth of my little brother Ralph, and the death of my mother a day or two afterwards, and then the death of the little boy himself.

Children at that age, I suppose, can remember very little, but an exquisite joy or an intense sorrow do leave their impression, even upon those who are very young. It is quite true that a year or two later than that, my father would take me on the eve of All Saints'—for that was the anniversary of my mother's death—up to the grave on the wind-swept headland, and used to stand there clasping me to his breast, and telling me that now I was his little all, so that perhaps I fancy I remember more of the actual time of my mother's death than I really do.

Mine was a very happy and a singularly peaceful life in those early days. My father, while he lived, was kindness itself; but he was a man with his own pursuits, and young as I was, I was of course only his toy, scarcely his companion. He had buried his heart, poor man, in the grave of his wife; he did not so very long survive her, for I was only seven years old when he died.

It was my dear Aunt Martha who really brought me up. She has always liked me to call her by the pet name M'amie. She was my father's only sister; a maiden lady of singular sweetness and evenness of temper and a thoroughly cultivated mind. She had loved my mother dearly, and she filled to the utmost a mother's place. Aunt Martha has always been a

deeply religious woman—her religion too has ever been of that deep and vigorous and sensible character, which has maintained itself as a witness to better things even in the darkest and most Puritanical days of the English Church.

The other great force in my early life—one who has been a dear and tried friend all along, a blessing to me and to many—was the Vicar of Markland.

Philip St. John had been my father's friend. He was a man of remarkable ability, and of a pronounced and determined character. He had a clear head, a warm heart, a will of unbending strength, a nature intensely manly in every sense of that word, softened and illuminated to an astonishing degree by divine grace. He had been at sea as a boy, I believe, and loved the sea with a passionate tenderness, as if it were a living thing. It was this love of the sea and his thorough knowledge of sailor life which helped to make him such an extraordinarily useful parish priest at Markland. Since first I remember him, he was not young. He was a tall man, broad-shouldered, and immensely strong; his hair was iron-grey, but one has lived to notice that the "iron" diminished, and the "grey" increased, and now—for I am thankful to say that as I write he is with us still—it is snowy white.

Nobody in Markland has ever called him Mr. St. John, he has always been known since I remember anything, as "Father Philip." This is not to be wondered at, for he has ever been to us all, rich and poor, the most thoughtful and sympathetic of fathers; in all our troubles we have gone to him,

and his wise judgment, determined courage, and sympathetic heart have been at our disposal in all the crises, great or small, of life.

Father Philip never did things by halves ; he was gentle and uncontroversial, but quite decided ; he was a thorough priest in the best sense of that sacred name. He made large allowances for others, and was on kindly and social terms with clergymen in the neighbourhood very unlike himself. He knew perfectly how large and generous the English part of the Catholic Church has tried to be ; no one was more large-hearted in allowing for the difficulties of others ; and for religious dissenters he had a sincere respect, and for some of them a strong personal affection ; but how some of the clergy, and even some members of the Episcopal Bench in those days, could accept the Prayer-book and then deny its doctrines—how, as he used to say, “Catholic priests could play at being protestant ministers,”—he never could understand ; and it filled him with sorrow that it was so, because he believed there was a consequent loss to souls. I do not pretend to understand all these questions. I am merely trying to draw him as I have known him. Besides devoting himself to his parish work, and being watchful and careful about the spiritual life of his people, Father Philip took the liveliest interest in their material prosperity. He certainly was, I suppose, an eccentric man, for he was unlike anyone else whom I have ever met. On one side of his character he was so gentle, so supernatural, and so devout, that he might have been a *Curé d’Ars* ; on the other side, he was a thorough Englishman, and not without a

curious bluntness or even roughness. He was, as I have said, a thorough seaman and a strong swimmer, and shortly after settling down at Markland, he re-organized all matters relating to the life-boat, which was an important institution on that dangerous coast, and was always one of the crew of it himself for many a year.

II.

MY readers will now have a fair idea of the kind of home I lived in, and the people who gave tone to that home. And now, I must relate the first important event, upon which the leading fact of my story turns. It will be understood that in my narrative of *this* event, I am not of course relying upon my own memory, although I have a dim and vague recollection of it, for I was only myself just five years old at the time. I have pieced and put together, however, this part of my story from the accounts given to me by my aunt, by Father Philip, and by my old friend Felix the fisherman.

It was the eve of All Saints, and the night was darker than pitch. Those who were brave enough to attend the evening service at Markland Church, required strength and knowledge : knowledge to guide them along the narrow path from the village to the churchyard, and strength to withstand the wind. On calm nights indeed many a little lantern glimmered along the path, and plenty even of the more aged folk toiled cheerfully, though slowly, up from the village. On this night, however, on which my chronicle opens,

no lantern would have sufficed to resist the wind, and few aged limbs could have made head against the storm. It would now-a-days, I suppose—so Father Philip used to say—be thought, unpractical and foolish to build a church so high up on the very crown of the headland, and so far from the homes of the people; but men had different thoughts in other days. This seafaring population seemed to love that their church should consecrate the coast, and the voice of prayer and praise rise high, right above the surging sea; they seemed to think it was worth while to take pains about religion, and that men should exert themselves for the things of God. To pull religion down to “the popular level,” to make it “conformable to the popular conscience”—to use the modern jargon—was not the ideal then, when our parish church was built, but to lift man up to God. And even now, indeed, our fishermen and sailors in the village have learnt to love the sight of the church on Markland Head when they are out at sea, or the glimmer of light which comes from the lamps always kept burning there, and reminding men—amidst the darkness of this life—of the light of another world.

It was not every church in our neighbourhood in those days, where people would have thought of observing the eve of All Saints, but Markland was not as other places in more ways than one, chiefly owing to my father’s and my aunt’s strong English Catholicism, and to the vicar’s eccentric goodness. The fact is that both the vicar and my father were revered by the fisherfolk as fathers and loved as

friends. It was not so difficult then for these two to make the honest, simple people feel that the teaching of the English Prayer-book—as the vicar often said—“is simple common-sense, and that the business of an English priest is to act accordingly.” I have already made it plain, however, that other things besides his strong religious faith contributed to strengthen Father Philip’s influence, and above all his utter kindness and his sailor-like habits. I do not know why he had abandoned his early calling as a seaman, but certain it is that no man had better understood the management of a vessel, that no arm has ever been stronger and no head clearer in moments of danger, and none among all the sea-faring men whose houses lie scattered round the cliffs have, more than the vicar, loved and respected the solemn sea.

One curious consequence of this was, there were neither “Bethels” nor “Bethesdas” in Markland. “Dissent, although”—I am quoting the vicar again—“it degenerates perhaps in these days, has, to be quite fair, done something for England. In many places it has grown up where the Church had gone to sleep, and where religion without it, seemed to have forsaken the people.” This has not been the case at Markland ever since I was a child. Our little sea-faring community have had their souls cared for with quiet unflagging energy, and this followed, viz., that the Markland sailors and fishermen, and the few farm people who worked inland—went to church!

Notwithstanding the lofty position, then, of the old church on Markland Head, notwithstanding the fact that Father Philip in very early days built a mission

chapel to help the old folk in the village, still on stormy nights and stormy mornings, as well as when sunlight or moonlight were sleeping on the heaving sea, the village procession of the poor people from the foot of the cliff would be seen winding up the hill side on a Sunday ; and even on other days a goodly sprinkling of poor folk were to be found " assisting " the vicar at his prayers. And so it came about that on that eve of All Saints, now so many years ago, there were with the vicar a considerable number of fishermen and their wives, and some of the younger lads of the village community joining in the evening service. " The English "—Father Philip was fond of saying—" are not a supernatural people, but average good men can help them, for with them, to the extremest point, ' the tree is known by his fruits. ' "

I go back to my story. The night was pitchy dark and biting cold. All the afternoon the wind had been rising. The sunset had been wild and stormy, as if the heavens had been flaring out the fiercest torches in warning of what they were likely to do ; and with the setting of the sun—instead of falling—the wind had been rising more and more. Masses of angry clouds had hung along the horizon and out of them, as from a cave of wild spirits, where the binding barriers were momentarily withdrawn, there rushed out fierce gusts of angry wind, lashing and rousing the troubled sea.

It was a kind of night when, although the wind was really in the north-west, and rising steadily to a gale, all the blasts of heaven seemed out ; there were eddying currents of air from every quarter, and these

eddyings seemed to play in whirlpools which became fiercer and colder from driving showers of sleet and rain. Landward, and even under the cover of the cliff, the woods of the park were moaning, and the trees, which a day before had been robed in golden clothing, that shone under the October sun, were now fast being stripped, and the leaves were whirled and dashed with pitiless violence, sometimes huddled up in heaps in the corners of the forest, sometimes driven violently into the upper air.

If in any place there might have been shelter, it would have been in the porch of the church, which looked away from the ocean; but even there the blasts, growing more and more ungovernable and unrestrained, found entrance, and as one or two belated fishermen entered the church, it required some force from their brawny arms to close the door.

There are few effects more striking or more solemnizing to a serious mind than the contrast between outer nature on such a wild night and the unruffled stillness of the church within. It is one of those obvious contrasts I suppose between earth and heaven, between sin and sanctity, between the toils of life and the "rest that remaineth," which few men fail to feel because they all are subjects of the great mystery. But to a congregation of seamen and fishermen like the handful gathered together on that All Saints' Eve in Markland Church, it was specially impressive. Something—one knows not what—perhaps the constant habit of being in danger, perhaps at once their fear and friendship towards the terrible sea; perhaps the training in comradeship rather than self-

seeking, which is one great educational power in a sailor's life—seems to make seamen more simply and frankly open to mysterious influences than can be the case with men always reared on the land. Anyhow, there was something specially impressive in the rise and fall of the voices of the vicar and the congregation, while with the storm rising higher and higher outside they quietly said the evening Psalms.

“Let them praise the Name of the Lord, for He spake the word and they were made; He commanded and they were created.”

“He hath made them fast for ever and ever; He hath given them a law which shall not be broken.”

“Praise the Lord upon earth, ye dragons and all deeps.”

“Fire and hail, snow and vapours; wind and storm fulfilling His Word.”

And even deeper seemed the stillness within, in contrast with the rising gale without, as the vicar's voice read the All Saints' lesson to the silent people.

“Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. As a ship that passes over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves;

“Even so we in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end.”

“For the hope of the ungodly is like a thin froth that is driven away by the storm.”

“But the righteous live for evermore.”

The lesson had scarcely ended when the door opened with more than usual suddenness, and the tall figure of a well-known fisherman of the village appeared.

The violence of the storm was so great that he seemed to struggle with the tempest before he closed the door again; and as heads were turned to see who the last comer was, it was impossible for those who looked at him not to notice that his face was deadly pale. Whatever flutter passed through the congregation, however, the vicar proceeded with untroubled calmness with the service, and the latest arrived fisherman had soon recovered himself sufficiently from whatever had disturbed him to sink on his knees along with the rest when they had reached the prayers.

It was with difficulty that the congregation struggled out of the church and down the rugged path when the service was done. Two men alone remained, apparently to speak to the vicar, when all was over. The one was the fisherman who had last entered, and who seemed scarcely yet to have recovered from his scare.

"Beg your pardon, sir," he said, addressing the vicar, as he came down the aisle; "the night's an uncanny night, and there's them about as bodes no good."

"The night is a wild night, Felix, and I fear we may have work to do on the shore before morning; but a seaman like you is used to a bad sou'-wester or nor'-wester either, and need scarcely have fear. Why, man, you look as white as if you had seen a ghost."

"And that's just what I have seen, vicar, or something of the sort, for there's them about, whate'er they be, as hav'n't been about since the old squire's death, and no man has ever seen the like o' what I've

seen to-night without some strange thing happening to them that are here."

"Hush!" said the vicar, and he turned to greet a tall man who had been kneeling in a hidden corner towards the western end, and now came slowly down the aisle. It was my father, and the vicar turned to him immediately, and told him what Felix had said. "I do not know what Felix may have seen, and it is not usual for me, Father Philip, to have to persuade *you* of the truth of supernatural appearances"—and he smiled an amused smile as he said so—"but there is no doubt that connected with our own history, and that of the Trelormans, there have been extraordinary appearances on this coast."

M'amie had been with my father, and she now approached the three men; and she has told me the whole story.

"We will go and see—if there *be* anything to see—what has scared Felix," said the vicar; "but first join me for a moment in my seamen's prayer."

They all went together into the south-eastern chapel—so it was called, though the church did not *really* stand quite east and west—which was built on the side towards the sea. It was called the "Chapel of Help," and I imagine that formerly it was probably the chapel of Our Lady of Succour ("Notre Dame de bon Secour"). The daylight showed very stately windows, of which, in the eastern one, was the figure of Our Lady in prayer, and in the side lights the Apostles with their shipping tackle, and St. Peter being rescued from the waves by our Lord. On the floor and on the walls were brasses in memory of our people who had

been lost at sea, and there were great beautiful figures in stone of the Angels of the Resurrection, as well as one of our patron saint, St. Colomb, kneeling right out on a pedestal, praying for sailors.

Father Philip had adapted a prayer from "prayers for those at sea," which he constantly used himself or with his people, and which all four joined in saying now :

"O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea, who hast compassed the water with bounds until day and night come to an end, be pleased to receive into Thy almighty and most merciful protection the persons of all seafaring men and sailors (especially—); preserve them from the dangers of the sea, and grant that they may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land, and with a thankful remembrance of Thy mercies, to continue Thy servants and persevere unto the end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

There was a special solemnity in such a prayer at such a time, for the storm was rising, and the wind and rain dashing against the church with indescribable fury. After a few moments of silence they rose from their knees and moved towards the door.

"Follow me," said Felix, when the door was closed behind them and they stood in the porch.

As they turned the corner towards the western end of the church there was one of those strange lulls in the wind that often come in a night of storm, a lull which we feel portends no good, but gives the impression of an angry pause on the part of the

enemy while gathering up forces for a fiercer attack. In the churchyard for a moment or two all seemed still, and the small party had little difficulty in quietly walking along the narrow path towards the face of the cliff. The path led straight to a stone seat placed against a low and rugged wall, where country folk could quietly sit on a summer evening, catching a glimpse on the left of the wide stretch of the ocean, and seeing before them the long green reaches and quiet woods of Markland Park. But this was not an evening to invite loiterers to sit and enjoy the scenery, and the four walked straight to the seat, and without a word, but apparently following the impulse given by Felix, the fisherman, stood upon the stone bench and faced out towards the sea. In a moment all was pitchy darkness, and then flash after flash of lightning shot across the heavens or went zigzagging in blue and silver from masses of threatening clouds down into the raging waves.

For what appeared some moments there was perfect silence, except for the moaning of distant winds, apparently far out on the horizon ; then came crash upon crash of thunder, followed by such a sudden rush of overwhelming tempest that all four threw themselves forward by a spontaneous impulse and clutched by the low wall to keep steady in their places. So swiftly did the flashes and the peals seem to follow each other that, though there were seconds of intervening darkness, they appeared to see almost continuously the scene before them. A foot or two of rock covered with stunted herbage stretched out beyond the wall, and then the cliff fell per-

pendicularly hundreds of feet into the seething water. At the bottom of the cliff was a narrow channel, and beyond it some dozen yards rose up a pointed rock about half the height of the cliff itself—a mere rugged islet going sheer down in all directions into the waves.

“Look there !” said Felix, pointing before him to the crag.

Around it the lightning, or some strange light more continuous than lightning, seemed to be playing, and, for what appeared to be many moments, illuminated every cranny. On the very peak of the cliff, as the fisherman spoke, there stood before the eyes of all of them a tall dark figure robed in gloom. For a moment or two it seemed to toss its arms as if in anguish, then came a piercing cry, then flash upon flash of lightning, then another crash of the thunder, then another furious onslaught of the tempest, which seemed to shake the old stones to which they clung, then utter darkness and, all was gone. No one spoke a word.

Again the apparition appeared ; three times the pageant was repeated, and then the storm seemed to break out with redoubled violence, accompanied with dashes of furious rain, so that they all involuntarily stepped backwards to the path and bent down to find what shelter they could from the violence of the blast.

“Let us be off,” said my father shivering ; “there is no time to lose.”

“It is the storm wraith,” said Felix, “I have never known it to appear since the night the old squire was

killed. God help you, Sir Ralph, it never happened in man's memory, without some strange thing following for you and yours, or them at the Hall."

There was no word spoken, for indeed, had there been, it had been impossible to hear while the four descended the steep and rocky path which led along the south-east side of the church and churchyard, and then down into the valley or chine, which separates Markland Head from the Priory Cliff.

Before they reached the bend in the sea wall, however, they all involuntarily turned to look once more towards the Monk's Crag. There was no reappearance of the storm wraith, but as they turned, my father seized Father Philip's arm, and pointed towards the sea. A light shot up from the water through the darkness, and then again and then again.

"They are signals of distress," said Father Philip ; "there is a ship on the reef."

It was not long before they were down the path and in the village, and the place—in spite of the gale—was alive and excited, for if our Markland men had learned anything from the vicar, it was that one of the chiefest duties of their lives was to see that the life-boat did its duty when a ship was on the reef.

III.

It was indeed a terrific night. At moments the darkness was dense, and then again the lightning was blinding, and with its lurid and startling brilliance, lit up the terrifying spectacle of a raging sea. Crash

after crash, the thunder broke with deafening peals, and then, at last in drenching sheets came down the rain. But the terrible obstacle in the way of those who had to man the life-boat was the fury of the sea ; with its fierce full swing, the tremendous ocean, lashed into madness by the pitiless gale, came dashing against that rock-bound coast. As imperturbable determination seems to goad into wilder fury the fierceness of human passion, so our calm and determined cliffs of Cornwall seem to turn the strength of the ocean into something like the violence of a fierce and resisted living creature, when it dashes in impotent fury against them, driven on by the wind.

At that time the harbour of Markland village was not so well protected as it has been since. I have seen tremendous storms upon our coast, and I have often seen the launch of the life-boat, but since I have been able to remember the harbour, there have been many improvements in it—mostly due to Father Philip's unresting persistency in worrying our maritime authorities, which did not exist at the time of which I write.

M'amie was down upon the quay in spite of the fierceness of the night, and not long afterwards—which might seem more extraordinary than it is to us, to people who do not know the habits of Markland—Lord and Lady Trelorman appeared upon the scene. When I say “appeared” I am of course using a figure of speech, for the night, except at intervals, was darker than pitch.

It requires an extraordinary impulse, in most cases, to move an English peer to interrupt the solemn

feast of dinner, and above all things to leave the dinner table to go out on a night of raging storm. Lord Trelorman was by no means the man to take his place in a life-boat, or to throw aside his cigar in order to dare the elements, and risk himself for his fellow creatures. But like other people, he was not impervious to the force of a powerful impulse, which he was quite unable to resist—that impulse was his wife. I do not pause now to describe her; she was a remarkable woman, as we shall have occasion to notice afterwards, and she had a strong sense that it was not consistent with her husband's position, that Sir Ralph Ferrers, my father, should always be to the front in moments of danger, and her noble husband always out of sight. There were other reasons, as you will see presently, why Lady Trelorman, who was a woman not at all wanting in intelligence, had a desire to stand as well as possible with the people of Markland.

Anyhow her ladyship and Lord Trelorman found shelter that night in Felix's cottage, which was so near the sea that the waves almost entered it, and which consequently was a kind of *rendezvous* on such occasions for all who desired to show their sympathy or satisfy their curiosity, although they had not the opportunity or the power to act.

No one who knew my father or the vicar in ordinary life would have recognized them at such a time. They both seemed to be moving masses of oilskins, and they and the select band of strongest fishermen were not long before they were at work on the launch of the life-boat. Again and again the

thing was attempted ; again and again there was the triumph of the sea ; but at last in spite of the raging waves and the opposing wind they were fairly off.

From time to time the signals of distress had gone up from the reef : now there was an ominous darkness there. The distance was not great, but the opposing forces were tremendous ; just below the great cliff which we call the "Island," and which runs out beyond Markland Head, and beyond Torth, a sunken reef projects for some hundred yards into the sea. The flash light on the headland, known to all skilled sailors, warns them where they are, but for a sailing vessel getting in too near the land, with that fierce lee shore before her, and a sudden and wild nor'-wester behind her, supported by the energy and fierceness of the ocean, what is the use of a flash light except to mark her doom ?

They watched the life-boat, those who were left on the shore. Sometimes, if I may so say, they *saw* nothing but pitchy blackness, sometimes in the fierce lightning, variegated with zigzags that shot down into the sea, they saw the life-boat for a moment rise on to the crest of the wave. Would she live through it ? Could she resist the impact of that fierce mass of water ? There were strong arms in her and clear heads, and men who understood how to deal with the sea, but the hurricane that night was terrific, and the risk was great, and men and women held their breath in an anguish of expectation to see in each flash of illuminating lightning whether still the boat was living as she neared the reef.

There was no one, so M'amie has told me, more keen,

more breathless, more anxious than Lady Trelorman. I always knew there was good in that woman ; she had a heart in spite of her sins and follies. I don't wonder she was anxious that night ; it was long afterwards, however, that *I* found out she had a heart. When people have hearts in the right place, even if they fall under great temptations, they are surely not very far from the grace of God.

Whether or not the effort had been fruitless, Nature was kind, and one or two vivid flashes of lightning showed that the life-boat had reached the reef. Then there was a long time of grave anxiety. The thunder-storm had been rolling over, and travelling steadily along the coast, but the wind had not abated much, and I need hardly say there was no apparent falling off in the sea.

How terrible are those moments of waiting, when we know nothing, and when imagination, which is the home of fear, is free to do what it will. I do not know, but I have no doubt—for since then I have passed through the same myself—that there were plenty of people in our village that night who went through something like years of agony during those two or three hours, from the time when Father Philip and my father launched the life-boat until they reached the land again.

For they did reach the land in safety, though their quest and their efforts seemed to have been almost in vain. The ship had gone down, or rather she had broken her back and gone to pieces ; for what ship could live for hours on that terrible reef, under the scourging of that terrible sea ? Not one single soul

was saved from the wreck, not one creature struggling in the last terrible trouble which they went through the darkness to save—"Not one," did I say? yes, there was one. In a moment of illumination from a lightning flash, Father Philip had seen something close to the reef before him; in an instant he had been in the waves, and then on the rocks, and then in the waves again, and they had got him back into the life-boat somehow, carrying in his arms a little child. The child was living when they came to land. Children have special protection I suppose from their angels, for somehow the storm did not seem, I believe, to have affected him much. Father Philip declared he had been on a plank, and had mistaken it for a cradle. The little thing was soaked, but he was alive and half-sleeping when they put him in the arms of Felix's wife, and she and Lady Trelorman undertook to see him warmly to bed. The game might hardly have seemed worth the candle. Appearance is one thing; Reality is quite another. What an unspeakable difference has been made in the long run to all of us by the rescue of that "Waif from the Waves!"

IV.

WHO the little boy was who had been saved from the sea no one in Markland knew, and I do not suppose that any one very much cared. I believe he was a pretty little child, and it was said by those who understood such things that he was about two years of age. Nothing was saved from the

wreck or found about his person—so they said—that served to throw any light upon his history. It was discovered that the ship which was lost was a barque, and its name was the *Ben Venue*. It was trading from the Colonies; it had touched a port in South Wales, and it was running for Plymouth at the time of the disaster. The skipper's name was known, but I forget what it was. About the child, nothing could be learned. One or two bodies were washed upon the rocks and laid to sleep with the rest who were waiting in the churchyard for the Resurrection—the victims of the hungry sea. The wife of old Felix—I forget, he was not “old” then—took care of the little child for a day or two, and Lady Trelorman was unflagging in her kindness, and sent clothes and gifts for the little boy; but after the first excitement Felix's wife, who was never a very high-minded or kindly person, grew tired of the child. Lady Trelorman appeared to flag in her attentions, and, to make a long story short, Father Philip adopted the boy, had him brought to the vicarage, engaged an excellent old nurse to take care of him, gave him his own surname as he could find no other for him, baptized him conditionally by the name of a brother to whom he was attached.

Things settled down at Markland in regard to that particular wreck, and our little “Waif from the Waves” was henceforth known to all men as Harry St. John.

V.

IT would be impossible for my story to be understood if I did not go back in some detail on the Trelormans.

As I have said, the St. Aldhams were an old Cornish family who had been, in political matters, as successful as my ancestors had been unfortunate, and had at last attained to the earldom of Trelorman. The Earl of Trelorman of the time at which I am now writing had succeeded his uncle—the line had seldom gone straight. It was said that as a young man, when he was Viscount Markland, he had been very much in love with a pretty girl, the daughter of a penniless English gentleman who lived in Northamptonshire. The family had opposed the marriage, and Lord Markland was not of sufficiently strong character to take his own line. He was married by his relatives to a certain Lady Mary Darton, who cared nothing for him, and for whom he cared nothing. But foolish weaknesses, like the paying attention to human affections, are things not unusually beneath the dignity of people of our rank in England. The girl whom Lord Trelorman had really cared for had been put aside, and with contempt, and shortly after, she had shown her pique by marrying a Mr. Berkeley, and by him she had one son. Her husband did not live long, and the young widow was left with the one son and an income which enabled her to enjoy life in a reasonable manner.

Rose Tracy, or Rose Berkeley, as she now

was, had really loved Lord Markland. Some women are so good and so noble that they can bear such treatment as she received with gentleness and dignity and a forgiving heart, but Miss Tracy, or Mrs. Berkeley, was not good and noble ; there was a great deal of good in her, and little touches of nobility of character here and there, but all this was considerably neutralized by the world, the flesh, and the devil—especially the devil. She was angry at the treatment which had been meted out to her, and the Trelormans, who had scorned her and separated her from Lord Markland, did not understand with whom they had to reckon. I have been told by M'amie that she met Lord Trelorman and his wife some years before this in Rome. The then Lady Trelorman, she told me, was an exceedingly pretty, but an exceedingly silly, woman, and between herself and her husband there was no real affection, but they got on uncommonly well for some time, especially as they were both devoted to their one son, Harold, Lord Markland, who was a very good-looking boy. To make a long story short, what happened was this:—Lady Trelorman fell into very bad health, and, poor thing ! her ill-health did not sweeten her temper ; the relations between herself and her husband in consequence became still more strained. Just at this crisis, Mrs. Berkeley appeared on the scene one winter in Italy. She was now a widow with only one son, and more attractive than ever. It was said that her conduct had embittered the last years of poor Lady Trelorman's life. Be that as it may, Lady Trelorman died

in Rome, and was buried, not in the family vault at Markland, which people thought extraordinary, but in the English cemetery in Rome. The world said that this was by her own request, because she had a shrewd suspicion who was likely to be her successor, and she feared they could never sleep peacefully in the same grave. Scarcely a year had passed after her death when Mrs. Berkeley became Countess of Trelorman.

M'amie never could endure her ; but I am bound to say, in fairness, that everybody acknowledged that her husband was a much better landlord and a much more useful person in the neighbourhood after his second marriage. Harold, the son by the first marriage, had been at Winchester and then at Christ Church, and between times was a good deal at home. M'amie was devoted to him ; she said he was a delightful boy, and her dislike to Lady Trelorman arose, I think, in great measure, from her belief that she had been unfair to him. Anyhow, Harold and his father did not get on well ; and people said that Lady Trelorman was jealous because of her own son, young Berkeley, and that the boys did not like each other ; and that the people on the estate did not improve matters by their affectionate admiration for Lord Markland and their contempt for, and dislike of, Mr. Berkeley, who, they considered, gave himself unjustifiable airs. The consequence of all this was that Lord Markland spent a good deal of his time away. In Italy he was very intimate with Sir William Durrell, of Stafferton, and it was then that Sir William had painted him in the dress of a *pifferaro*

in that beautiful portrait which, until lately, hung in the gallery at Stafferton Court. I believe that particular dress was adopted in consequence of a perfectly harmless escapade of Lord Markland. He had adorned himself as a *pifferaro*, and played his pipes in that character, in order to please a very pretty creature, the daughter of an Italian count by an English mother, with whom he had fallen desperately in love in a summer wandering in the Volscian Hills. Lord Trelorman was indignant at this, for he had his own intentions about his son's marriage, and it was believed—M'amie always believed it—that Lady Trelorman had fanned the flame. Be that as it may, the father and son had a serious quarrel; the beautiful Lucia di Sant' Onorato became Lady Markland, and Lord Trelorman vowed that he would never speak to his son again.

Unfortunately for Lord Markland, his father had a great deal of power in his hands, for although much of the property was entailed, the wealth which supported it depended entirely upon his father's good will, and Lord Markland was literally left for the time being without a shilling.

I believe my father did his best to effect a reconciliation; but though he liked young Markland, yet, as he had a sort of inherited contempt for the Trelormans, he was scarcely likely to do much with a weak, obstinate, vindictive man like the then earl, especially if he were backed up by his very clever and determined wife, to whom, I am afraid, my dear father, inspired by M'amie, would show no quarter

Father Philip, I believe, also did his best. It was all in vain. The young couple had to find shelter where they could ; and I have every reason to believe that my father, although he was far from rich, supplied them with money. Sir William Durrell offered assistance, and asked them to Stafferton ; but Lord Markland was proud, and had in him an element of Bohemianism which helped him to take a line of his own. He was very young and very high-spirited, and he had inherited, I suppose, from his ancestors, and imbibed from his surroundings at Markland, a devotion to the sea. He deliberately entered the merchant service. That was an even more remarkable thing to do in those days than it is in these.

Anyhow, Lord Markland, who was in any case too old to pass for the Navy, did enter the merchant service. He was away for a year, and came home to find his young half-Italian wife the mother of a little boy of a week or two old. That child had been born at Stafferton Court. The poor fellow had unbent so far in his difficulties, and had been so much moved by the kindness of Lady May that he had left his young wife under her care. When Lord Markland came home, my father and my aunt saw nothing of him—his wife they had never seen—but they heard from Stafferton that he had made a little home of his own for his wife and child near some Welsh seaport whilst he was on his voyages in hopes of better times, and that meantime he had no wish that they should be noticed or known.

VI.

AND now I return to my story. A day or two after the storm, which I have described, and the landing of "The Waif from the Waves," a very sad and strange thing happened, of which I have still a faint dream of remembrance, but the exact narrative of which comes of course from M'amie. The storm I have spoken of had subsided, and the weather had turned bitterly cold; there had been a fall of snow of unusual violence for our part of the country, something like what I suppose the Americans would call a blizzard—men about that part of Cornwall had never seen anything like it in their lives. The roads were blocked, whole avenues of trees in great places like Markland or Mount Edgecombe were borne down by the weight of the snow, and it lay so long and with such persistence, that there was very serious interruption to the ordinary affairs of life. I think, from what I have been told, the country must have looked like Northern Russia or Lapland for at least three weeks. It was just towards the close of the third or fourth week of this tremendous storm, that M'amie found it necessary to go over to Torth on one of her many missions of charity. To drive was out of the question; to walk by the sea-path was possible, and dear M'amie has never been put off in later times, and I have no doubt, still less was she put off in those times, from doing what she deemed to be duty by

mere physical difficulty. She fulfilled her mission at Torth, and in coming home it was necessary for her to go either along the headlands or through Markland Park. She chose the latter route, for this reason, that she desired to give a message to Lady Trelorman. Naturally she found her ladyship alone on such an afternoon, especially as it was growing dark.

M'amie, as I have said, disliked Lady Trelorman, but they always kept up their visiting acquaintance all these years; she has told me she was struck that afternoon with the fact that Lady Trelorman was strangely nervous and anxious-looking and uneasy, and I used to attribute it to this, that I knew M'amie did not like her, that I knew how severe and dignified M'amie could be if she were with people she did not like, and that possibly Lady Trelorman was not equal, at the moment, to the usual well-bred hypocrisy with which people of what are called the "upper classes," cover their likes and dislikes. However, M'amie, with all her gentleness and goodness, was always a very clear-sighted person, and she has stuck to it from first to last, that there was more in it than *that*. When she left the Hall she went by the lower path across the park, not by the church and the sea. It was the gloaming of a November afternoon—the "dimmits," as we call it in Cornwall—and "gloaming," as you know, at that time means almost the dark. However, there was the moon getting up in the heavens somewhere, and there were scudding clouds: the light was rather better, too, because of the remnants of the snow, although the thaw wind had been gradually clearing it away. M'amie crossed

the path through the park and got out into the road which leads straight to the bridge that crosses the brook to the Priory. Just as she turned out of the stile into the road the snow seemed deeper but stronger, filling up a ditch on the right, and she made a sort of short cut across it as it felt as if all was frozen and safe. Suddenly, in the soft snow her foot struck against *something*, the feeling of which caused her some discomfort : it was not hard like a stone ; it was different, and the intricacies and details of feeling are difficult to describe, but the nerves of feeling carry messages quite as quickly as the nerves of sight. M'amie almost tumbled over it, and then recovered herself and bent down and brushed aside the snow, and then—what was her horror to find it was a human body ! She has often told me how she hardly knew what she was doing when she hurriedly fled back to the Hall ; she had soon roused grooms about the stables, and footmen in the house, and every one was in commotion. She had sent a message to Father Philip, and a number of people assembled to assist. The body was raised out of its snowy grave. It was the body of a woman ; she was dressed in a grey travelling suit ; her hat, if she had worn one, was gone ; her hair, which was in great confusion and naturally curly and golden as a summer dawn, was tumbled and tossed about and stiff with ice and patches of snow ; her hands were delicate and beautiful, and on her left hand was a wedding-ring, guarded by a hoop of diamonds. It was evident she had not come to her end by foul means.

It was thought better to carry the body to the

Priory—I suppose because M'amie was so interested in the case—than to take it to the Hall ; but Lady Trelorman came down with great kindness that night to visit my aunt and to see the body. My aunt said she was excessively kind, but very much agitated, and asking with an astonishing eagerness if any one could find out who it was. No one did know who it was. The usual formalities were gone through, and all inquiries were made, and those inquiries produced no information in the world. My father, I believe, thought that M'amie was distraught by her suspiciousness, but M'amie felt convinced—and she told my father and Father Philip of her conviction—that *that* poor dead girl, though she had never seen her, was Lady Markland ; and what is more, she felt convinced that Lady Trelorman knew it as well as herself. There was a good deal of talk about it at the time, but no one about seemed to share these suspicions. Lady Trelorman was very eager and earnest in urging M'amie to keep the rings which were found on the dead woman's hand, and M'amie did keep them, and those rings I am now wearing as I write, and at the back of a miniature which hangs before me there is a lock of golden hair cut off by M'amie and preserved until now. The poor dead thing was laid in the churchyard, and Father Philip marked her grave by a plain wooden cross ; that plain wooden cross has since given place to one of stone, and on it, at this moment, are inscribed the words, "Of your charitie pray for the soul of Lucia Viscountess Markland, who perished in the snow, Nov. 18——, requiescat in pace."

VII.

SUCH were the chief events which affect my story in my early years; I need not detain my readers with the details of the years which followed. When the things which I have detailed occurred, I was somewhere about five years old. My father died after a short illness when I was between seven and eight. I remember dear M'amie's grief, and I have some recollection of my own, but I was very young, and I suppose *that* soon passed away, for M'amie has been the great power—she with Father Philip—in my life. I know that things settled down quietly at Markland—I have increasing remembrance of my days in the schoolroom with my governess, who was kind and good to me, and whom I really was fond of; but childhood goes easily on, and is only marked by incidents here and there which remain in the memory, and there are only two or three incidents which it is necessary for my purpose that I should relate.

I can't remember when first I became intimate with little Harry St. John, for I feel as if I had always known him. I was really three years older than he, and so, in a way, I took care of him when we met on the beach together, or had a walk with our respective nurses or governesses on the sands. He was just like a brother to me, and Father Philip and M'amie were on such terms with each other that we were allowed always to be like brother and sister together. Time went on and Harry had to go to his prepara-

tory school ; his holidays were a delight to me when the old relations were revived as before. But the preparatory school time ended, and Father Philip sent Harry to Winchester.

The two incidents that I referred to as bearing more or less upon my story, occurred one Christmas holidays when Harry had come home. I suppose he must have been about fourteen, and I must have been about seventeen—but I think I must have looked young for my age, for we had lived such a quiet life, and all the excitements that I had developed were excitements about our poor fishing people and the interest created by visiting the poor. I lived in a world of my own ; it was made up of Father Philip, M'amie, my governess and Harry, Felix the fisherman, his daughter Nora, who was my maid, a young sailor, Jim, who was her lover, various boys in my Sunday-school class, and a great number of characters in history whom I hated, or to whom I was devoted, and a rather ideal devotion to Lady Dorothy Masham and Lady May Durrell, whom I really scarcely knew, but about whom M'amie was very eloquent indeed.

Now, it was this summer when I think I was about seventeen that M'amie took me off to the Tyrol, and then across into the uplands of Umbria, for it was a great deal too hot to be staying in the lowlands of Italy, and then, in October, we got down to Florence and paid a flying visit to Rome. I should have loved to stay there, but M'amie was not well, and I could not bear that she should suffer, and so we came home gradually by the Cornice, although we waited at Genoa for some time, so that I began

to think we should not reach Markland in time for Christmas. If I am to tell the truth, I suppose that it was then that a kind of half revelation broke upon me. I did not know until then how intensely I longed for Harry's holidays, but I began to realize in a misty way, when we were waiting at Genoa, what an immense difference his presence or his absence made to me.

I think I put this away from me as girls do, but there it was. It was during those Christmas holidays when we were fairly back at Markland, that he and I were wandering, as we were always used to do, on the sands on a bright winter afternoon. We had walked as far as Torth, and Harry had been gathering shells or something on the edge of the sea, and I had wandered on across the gap of sand which lies between the two headlands, and had sat down quietly on a rock to pull up some seaweed and watch some crabs or something in the pools. Down there with us, in December, it is often like summer, and it was a quiet, soft, sweet afternoon, and I sat there dreaming and watching for some time, until suddenly I was startled by finding the water at my feet. I knew the sea well, and was not easily frightened, but I was startled this time, for the tide had been rising and I gave a great cry. Harry heard me and turned. I saw him throw off his jacket and his cap and in another minute, he was in the sea: really, it was only just in time, for, half swimming, half wading, he took me from the rock and carried me—he was a real strong, manly boy—straight off to the land.

“A pretty mess we have made of our clothes,

Lettice," he said; "there wasn't really a bit of danger, but it would never have done to drown you, for some day you have to be my little wife."

"You silly boy," I said, "I am more likely to be your grandmother," and we laughed over our little joke together.

It is strange how small things make an impression; it was the first time Harry had made a joke of that kind, and it did make its impression on me.

It was within a day or two of this, that the next little incident happened; it was only a trifling incident, but it brings out what is really interesting in my story. Somehow or other we spent an evening during the Christmas holidays at the Hall; I cannot remember now how it came about, for M'amie not only detested Lady Trelorman, but also, in spite of her gentleness and goodness, the old Adam in her took the form of a dislike to the St. Aldham family as traditionally due to them from ourselves. That kind of pride, when you come to think of it, is really astonishing. I suppose it is more or less in us all. Really well-bred people conceal it by their excellent manner, while ill-bred people—especially if they are of "high rank," for there are many people of "high rank" who are quite astonishingly implacable in such things—show it in a way that is sometimes obnoxious and sometimes amusing. Dear old M'amie, I don't think she ever felt it or ever showed it, as far as I know, except when poor Lady Trelorman was about.

However, we *did* spend an evening at the Hall,

and Father Philip was there, and Harry was there, and Mr. Berkeley, Lady Trelorman's son—a perfectly inoffensive and stupid man—was there too. There were a number of people from the neighbourhood ; it was a regular Christmas gathering ; it was very nicely done, and the place looked extremely pretty. I enjoyed myself immensely. Lady Trelorman was very kind to me ; it was the first time that I had ever really known much about her, and I can't exactly say how it was, but she did attract me, and I know that I attracted her. She was very handsome ; she was very decided ; she knew exactly what she was doing ; but, besides that, there was a strange, restless anxiety about her face sometimes which interested me. We had a pleasant dance, and I danced a great deal with Harry. I was not what is called "out," and I think that kind of country gatherings is often really pleasanter for a girl under such circumstances than the stately balls to which she goes afterwards in society. As we drove home that night, M'amie was extraordinarily silent, and I really thought she was tired. When we reached the Priory, there was a glorious wood fire in the hall, and we sat down to have some coffee that was brought in to us at once. I sat down in an armchair and put my toes on the fender, whilst M'amie sank down on to a couch at our side. Suddenly, to my astonishment, she burst forth—

"That woman is intolerable ; I always disliked her, but I think her intolerable. What *do* you think she said ? Why, my sweet child, she said you were beautiful as the dawn, and she could not take her

eyes off you—vulgar woman! as if I couldn't have told her that." At this, I burst into a peal of laughter, for it seemed to me so inexpressibly ridiculous.

"M'amie, dear," I said, "what was the harm in that? it was nonsense, but why should you be so angry?"

"Stop, my dear Lettice," added M'amie. "What do you think she said besides? She said that Harry St. John was extremely good-looking and a very attractive boy, and volunteered the advice that I had better take care what I was doing, or that you might think more of him than it was well you should—the impudence of the woman! the ill-bred vulgarity of her! as if a girl with the blood of the Ferrers in her veins could ever fall in love with a boy who does not know who his father and mother are—a mere waif from the waves!"

I am glad to say I had the presence of mind to fall back upon another peal of laughter, and then to get up and kiss dear M'amie and tell her not to be ridiculous, and not to attend to anything said by Lady Trelorman; but I am afraid that I was rather hypocritical, and I have ever since thought that it was very simple of M'amie to say all that to me, not to say extremely imprudent!

VIII.

I DO not think that Harry and I were in any degree less friendly in consequence of all this; on the contrary, I am sure in looking back upon it that more and more I

thought about him and discovered how happy I was when I was with him, and how I missed him when he was away. However, life went on in an even, quiet way at Markland, until the following spring.

Soon after Christmas, Lord Trelorman died. His illness was short, and the people about whispered that he had been most unhappy, but that he had refused to see Father Philip to the last. M'amie would not believe that his wife was in any sorrow at all. Women are curiously hard upon women; and M'amie, in spite of all her sweetness, had no quarter for Lady Trelorman; for me, I was very sorry for her, and I thought she looked genuinely heart-broken. Nothing was changed at Markland Hall in consequence of its master's death; we heard that there were no heirs-at-law and that the late earl had left everything to his wife, in any case for her life-time, and then if it was found, as was suspected, that Lord Markland was dead and had died without heirs, giving her power to leave property and money precisely as she pleased. Mr. Berkeley was of course with his mother at first, and then occasionally. Every one took for granted that he was the heir to the property, but he never interfered in anything, and stayed less and less at the Hall as time went on. Some said that his mother was jealous, and that he was a prudent man as his prospects were in her hands. Others whispered, especially the fishing people, that the Hall was haunted, and that Mr. Berkeley could not bear it.

IX.

IN the spring, after Lord Trelorman's death, I was "presented," and then I had what they call "come out." M'amie insisted upon it, and I suppose it was all right, but we did not stay long in London, for the rush and unreality of that Babylon I thoroughly detested, although I greatly enjoyed going to the play. Early in the summer, we spent a fortnight at Ravensthorpe, and it was then for the first time that I was really entranced by the story of Lady Dorothy and "The Broken Vow." There is nothing to tell about my quiet life at Markland, when we got home again, except one or two apparently trifling things which really affect the main point of my story. Harry left Winchester that summer and had made up his mind to go to sea—he was going into the merchant service, partly, I suppose, because he was too old for the navy, but also, I imagine, because Father Philip believed that no one could be a real sailor who went into the navy as constituted now.

There is a place beyond Torth, of which I had often heard but which I had never visited, named Lawgan, to which Father Philip offered to take me with Harry, one beautiful day that June. It was towards the end of June, and the country was lovely; we drove along the headlands, and on our left was a wide stretch of the ocean, moving in with its great blue rollers which broke at last into foam of pearly

white. The wild roses were out in the hedges; the gorse was in full blow on the commons, and as we descended the steep hill into Lawgan, the high hedges were still filled with wild flowers, and the trees seemed decked with the freshest green. Lawgan is situated in a deep valley, and of extraordinary beauty; no one could imagine, if they had not seen it, that any place so hidden, so soft, with all the loveliness of wild flowers and woodland could be—as it is—within half-an-hour of the Atlantic. Down in this sequestered dell there is the old parish church surrounded by its beautiful churchyard, and within a stone's throw of it, a convent of Carmelite nuns. These had been settled here in the persecuting days; they had come from Belgium and had held their ground, anyhow for over a hundred years. Their chapel, which we visited, was quite religious, although not altogether in good taste, but in it there hung a really fine picture by Reubens, a memento of their Belgian origin; but like all pictures of Reubens, to my mind, much too naturalistic, and “of the earth, earthy,” really to catch the spirit of so great and solemn a fact as the Scourging. The good padre who took charge of the little flock of Romans and these Carmelite nuns, we found draped in his cassock, with a gun in his hand, having shot some wild pigeons, with a view, I suppose, to his dinner. He was exceedingly courteous, showed us all that could be shown about the beautiful old buildings, and then took Father Philip with him to his house, while Harry and I went off to the woods. Sitting in those woods—I shall never forget it—Harry startled

me as I had never been startled before. We had been gathering wild flowers and talking and laughing quite simply about all manner of things. We sat down on a green bank under the trees to rest, when he turned round and spoke to me in a quiet, earnest way.

"Lettice, darling," he said, "I am going to sea in a month or two, and I want to say something to you before I go."

His face was so earnest and honest, and he looked at me so straight with his beautiful large grey eyes; it was impossible to stop him, although suddenly I felt my heart beating violently and my blood rushing to my temples and then going back, so that I gasped for breath.

"Lettice, darling," he said, "I love you more than any one in the world; you are *everything* in the world to me. Will you let me think of you as my sweetheart now? Will you some day be my wife?"

He was so quiet and earnest, it was difficult to remember that he was really only a boy. He had taken hold of my hand and I did not take it from him, but as soon as I could find my voice, I was able to say,—

"Harry, dear, you are much too young to talk in this way; you will change your mind a hundred times before you are five-and-twenty; let us be just the old friends that we have always been." I spoke seriously. No girl, I imagine, of principle can—so to speak—"let herself go" in a minute, and no right-minded girl could be untrue or wanting in seriousness to such as he.

For a moment an expression of pain passed over his face, and then still looking steadily at me, he said in such a quiet, determined way, there was no possibility of evading an answer,—

“Lettice, darling, do you love me?—that is all I want to know.”

Love him! of course I had never said as much to myself, but I knew it now without any mistake. A woman does know it as she has never known it before when once the man she loves asks her the question. Love him! I felt with a great rush of feeling that life without him was emptiness, that there was no one in the whole world like him, that he was everything, literally everything, to me. We were only children. He was only, as I had told him, a boy; but there was something about him always so deep and so real that no girl in her senses could have treated him *merely* as a boy. At any rate, I could only give him one answer—

“Yes,” I said, “Harry dear, I do love you. I love you with my whole heart.”

“That’s all I want, darling Lettice,” he said, quite quietly and earnestly, and then bent towards me, putting his arm round me, and gave me one long kiss. It was the first time that our lips had ever met, and it was the symbol of an undying devotion—that first long kiss of love.

X.

RIGHTLY or wrongly, I did not see any necessity of saying a word to M’amie about my conversation with Harry. Women in such things I suppose are

more prudent than men, and I really felt that, though I was confident he could be entirely trusted, still it would be unfair to compromise him by revealing what had passed.

For indeed I felt, without doubting him in the slightest degree, that he was very young, and that one *ought* to feel that he had a right to change. I have tried to look back carefully to find when all this happened, for I have never been good at dates, and I know that he must have been scarcely eighteen, and I had just turned one-and-twenty. We *got on*, on the easiest terms of perfect happiness throughout the remainder of that summer. There was a sort of understanding between us ; but we had known each other so long, that it never occurred to either of us to behave in any special way as declared lovers. The night before he left Markland, we walked round the headlands, across the sands of Torth, and up to the highest point of the "Island," where, under a beetling rock, at its summit we sat together, and looked out upon the sea. It was a glorious afternoon early in October, the summer seemed to be still lingering fondly along our coast ; the ocean kept rolling in with a quiet solemn roll, without a sign of storm ; the western heavens were red with the approaching sunset, and over all there was that special dreamy calmness which belongs to the early autumn. We sat silent for some time, for I think in truth our hearts were full ; for me, I was feeling with intensity how desolate it all would be when he was gone. He was stronger than I was, and in some ways older, although younger in

years, and that afternoon he was more than usually thoughtful. What a beautiful boy it was, with his black curly hair blown about in the breeze, and his quiet, serious face, now fixed in thoughtfulness on the ocean, now turned so tenderly towards me.

"Lettice, darling," at last he said, taking both my hands in his, "this is good-bye, you know; but you will never forget me, and I will never forget you, though I may be away on the wild, sad sea. I am only a 'waif from the waves,' as they call me, but I will work hard to be not quite unworthy of you, for I love you, Lettice darling, and you are my own sweetheart, and you will never think hardly of me, whatever comes or goes?"

There was no need to answer him, for he kissed me again and again, and those quiet loving kisses said more than words could say.

Almost a year passed on since Harry had gone to sea. We heard from time to time from Father Philip whatever he knew about him, and how he was getting on. It was towards the end of November of the following year, Felix's wife accosted me one evening on leaving her cottage—I visited there not infrequently, as usual, and always took an interest in my little maid, Nora, who was Felix's daughter, and engaged to be married, as I have said, to the fisherman Jim. The wife I had never liked, I don't know why, and I was startled when she stopped me that evening to speak to me outside her cottage. She drew a letter from her pocket, and said it had been enclosed from Master Harry, in one to her husband. She added

that he had said it was to be given to me privately, and handing it to me, she made her curtesy, and bade me good night. I had never had a letter from Harry in my life. This did not exactly occur to me at the moment. Thinking back over it now, I suppose I had felt in a half-unconscious way that M'amie would not approve of it, and he had never alluded to writing to me. Perhaps from having the same sort of feeling myself, I did not read my letter at once. I hurried back to the "Island," where Harry and I had said "Good-bye." I read it hurriedly, closed it there, and hurried home. Again I read it, when, having reached home, I was in my room at the Priory, to get ready for dinner. When Nora left me I read it again. It was short and—I fancied like himself—straightforward; it only said that he hoped that though we had long been so closely acquainted, notwithstanding anything that I might imagine otherwise, I would always continue to think of him *as a friend*. The letter repeated, "Whatever I may have said to the contrary, you will think of me *only as a friend?*" I did not blame him for writing it; I thought, not that he was untrue, but that when he had spoken to me he had been, as I had told him, merely a boy, and that he was acting honourably by me, in trying to undo a boyish mistake. It never occurred to me, I say, to think hardly of him, but to me, there was no denying it—fool as I thought I was—it was a blow. How thankful I was now, that I had never said a syllable about it to Father Philip, and never a word to M'amie.

Mr. Berkeley had been rather more at the Hall that

autumn, and had called several times at the Priory. Not many days after I had received the letter, he found me alone in the library, and—to my extreme astonishment—for he was almost old enough to be my father, he, in the most courteous manner, but I thought with considerable formality, proposed to me ! Somehow or other, although I was astonished, I was not in the slightest degree agitated, and I think with quite as much courtesy as the proposal had been made by him, I very quietly declined the honour. He did not seem upset or ruffled, and we parted in an entirely friendly manner. I told M'amie about it in the course of the evening, and I was somewhat astonished at her indignation. As for me, my heart was as cold as an iceberg. At the moment I cared very little about anything.

Life went on with us very quietly as if nothing had happened ; and I heard nothing more of Mr. Berkeley's proposal, and no one in Markland saw or heard very much more of him ; for although I believe he was occasionally at the Hall, *we* certainly saw nothing of him any more. There is nothing more that touches my story to tell during the ensuing year. Our life went on in its even beat ; I hardly knew, except by slow degrees, how much the world had changed to me, and it was only by slow degrees that dear M'amie began to wake up to the fact, that do what I would, *I* was changed.

PART II.

I.

THERE is no doubt, that from the night I received the mysterious letter, I had turned a page in history. Life up till now had been the life of a child. Things came and went in an even course, like the ordinary routine of the natural world, but now I became conscious of a seriousness and reality in life. Until that sad evening when I had sat alone on the "Island," and read the letter, and when I read it again in my own room, I had not realized—I had not allowed myself to realize—how much, how very much my old playmate had become to me. Now, do what I would, it was all too plain. Things, places, above all, persons creep into our lives we hardly know how, and it is only some sudden change or unexpected shock which enables us to realize the fact. I realized the truth now, and with a shudder of despair. I had learnt to love Harry. He had gradually, imperceptibly, taken possession of my heart. I was angry with myself because it had been so, and now, because I could not hide it from myself—but there it was. It seemed to me that the one thing I was bound to do was to turn him out of my thoughts and life, and that *that* was the one thing quite impossible. I had myself told him, it is true, that he was a mere boy, that he was only acting on a boyish impulse when he

expressed his love for me, and that all this meant nothing at all. Now I knew, for the first time, how little in my heart of hearts I had believed the words that I had spoken. He was all the world to me. There was the fact which rose grim and menacing before me, and as it rose, it seemed to point, with persistent force—like a cruel warning ghost—to a long stretch of grey uninteresting life before me, which must be travelled over by me before the end.

The history of the joys and sorrows of souls is, I have often thought, the only real history. The outside pantomime of life—how much is made of it, and how little it really means! It is in the inner world of thought and emotion and motive that character is decided, and that the real destinies of lives are determined. Looking back, now that I am older and can see it all in true perspective, I can see how grateful I must ever be for the loving influence of the one or two who really loved me, and for the principles which they had implanted in me which had stood me in stead. Such a blow as that which had fallen upon me does one of two things in a young girl's life, supposing she really thinks and feels. Either she finds repose in selfish cynicism, which, of course, has its attraction for us all. She may be bitter and scornful, and look upon herself as an interesting sufferer, and grow in disbelief in truth of character anywhere, seeing that she has been so deceived. I do not think this only happens to the proud or selfish or impatient. Characters which have been simple and sincere may suffer so. Flowers expand in the sunshine and shrink in the east wind, and some charac-

ters are blighted and stunted, like the plants in springtime, by a sudden and cruel frost. But then, it *may* be otherwise. After the numbness which comes from the first stunning blow, a character may recover. There is a real revelation of things through sorrow. There is an indescribable something of strength and power which comes to strong souls from adversity; and to those who are not strong, as of course I was not, it comes through the goodness and tenderness of those who love them. At that time I owed everything to my sweet old M'amie and to Father Philip. Neither of them, of course, knew why I was not quite myself, nor could I, of course, have spoken a word upon the subject to either; indeed, I shrank from allowing the truth even to myself; but, none the less, they knew that I was not quite happy, and their tenderness and wisdom did for me what a stronger character might have done for herself. I had never read sensation novels, or heard schoolgirls' love stories, but, somehow, I had imbibed from M'amie a strong belief in the dignity and sanctity of real love, and a horror for mere sentimentalism and the indulging in foolish dreams. As for Father Philip, much of his teaching might be summed up in sayings of his on happiness and sorrow which had sunk deeply into my mind. "Your happiness," he often used to say, quoting, I think, from some of his beloved French writers, "is in your own hands, not in the hands of others; if you choose to be happy, you can." And then he was always insisting on the duty of brightness and the duty of strength; and he was fond of saying, "If you do not find sunshine in life, you go a long way to

wrapping other people's lives in cloud." "Suffer you *must*," he used to say, too, "for you are human, but suffer well and wisely you *ought*; for you are a Christian."

This kind of saying ran all through Father Philip's intercourse with everyone. Little pithy sayings of his, coming in the midst of ordinary conversation, used to fasten on one's mind, and give one so much to think of. It was not only, however, his sayings that told upon one. They were only the outcome of a life. He was so natural, so simple, so full of supernatural tone and temper, and yet so bright and sunny and strong, that even weak people like myself, and at a time when life's weather was looking grey and hazy, gained unconsciously from him both sunlight and strength. Besides, he was Harry's father. To be near him was to be not so very far from his beloved boy. I came to feel that while the dream in which I had been unconsciously indulging must end. I could not help having buried deep within my heart the everlasting reality of a sweet love. Dear Father Philip! There certainly never was anybody like him! He had all the sound sense and vigour of a healthy English nature, and all that peculiar grace and charm which belongs to some of the old French clergy when they are—as they so often are—genuinely good.

As for my beloved M'amie, she, of course, was everything to me now. She knew that I was not quite happy. It was impossible, especially just at first, to conceal it from her, and she was more than usually tender, and exerted herself, as if by instinct,

to give the active interest in life which I needed so much.

So it came about that even the mere numbness and bitterness of the shock I had, had passed away, and I woke up to feel that weakness or mere melancholy I would not allow. Things, however, had changed. The world had another aspect. Before, it had seemed a scene of dreamy enjoyment, now it was a theatre for work. I was suddenly older. I felt it. I know it now, looking back upon that time. I had been, the other day, a child; now I was a woman. A great, a really unintelligible, and to me inexplicable, sorrow had come upon me, and, thanks to the love and wisdom of my two kindest friends, I had learnt, in consequence, the duty and necessity of more unselfishness and strength. It was an effort, but I was soon conscious of the reward. Up till now I had been ever leaning on my dear old aunt. I began to feel soon, what has ever since been the case, that she was able to find some support in me.

II.

AND now I come to several of those strange incidents which have marked my life. All that I have told has been intended to make it clear what the inner influences were which at this time were at work upon me. I have said enough, and too much, of all this, but it was needed, to make quite clear the meaning of the incidents which follow.

It was now a considerable time since Harry had

sailed. It was on the November after his departure that I had received his extraordinary letter. The spring and summer of the following year we spent—M'amie and I—at the Priory. Our occupations were much as usual. I was more than ever in the village, and my sailor-boys' class had become my great delight. I can't say exactly how or why it was, but certainly M'Amie allowed me to work more in the parish and in my classes, and now—I hardly knew why—I settled things for myself, and arranged matters more than before, and gradually felt, as I have said, that dear M'amie was leaning upon me, and allowing me to take the lead. I suppose I had grown more strong.

Late in the summer we went to spend a few weeks at Stafferton. I had been there before, but I had no clear remembrance of it. It was very different now. It was the end of July, and we stayed—for M'amie had an old-world way of paying long visits, if she paid any at all—till the middle of September. The boys were at home for their holidays, and they and Sir William were a good deal on the moors. The moors were now in their summer beauty. The "ling"—as they call their heather in Yorkshire—was a sheet of purple, and the woods and hills round Stafferton were glorious. If I can't have my Cornish headlands and my Cornish sea, then give me the hills and woods of Craven.

However, I am not engaged in writing an exordium on Stafferton. I mention our visit for one reason—it was now, for the first time, that I really became acquainted with Lady May. The house was full. There were plenty of people to attend to, but some-

how she managed to be extraordinarily kind to me. Some people take to one another from the first, and certainly I loved Lady May at first sight. She was almost the sweetest woman I ever met. There was such extraordinary grace and gentleness, and yet you felt the power of command in a really self-forgetting woman who quite knows her own mind. With some people I felt I could hold my own, and would, because I could not be guided by them. With Lady May I was every inch a child. I loved her, and have ever since loved her. She was quite the most beautiful and the sweetest woman I think I ever saw. I will not, however, dwell in detail on the summer at Stafferton. It was a happy time, in spite of my troubles, but it marked an era for me by what happened there, which I now relate.

It was a pretty evening in August, and every one was out after afternoon tea. M'amie, indeed, was not out, she had gone to lie down; but the others had dispersed hither and thither, and Lady May and I were left in the small drawing-room alone.

There had been a good deal of talk about the new picture gallery which Sir William had built, and the rearrangement of his pictures. I had not seen, at least not carefully, the picture gallery, and Lady May proposed that we should then and there visit it together. Sir William himself was an artist of no inconsiderable power, as his father had been before him; and, as I was fond of pictures, one of the chief pleasures I had looked forward to in Stafferton was to see the gallery.

Passing by the great staircase, Lady May made me

pause to look at the well-known picture of old Sir Hugh.

"Do you see a likeness?" she asked.

"Of course I do; it is the image of Sir William, only without the goodness in *his* face."

"It is true," she answered. "I saw it years ago, when first I met Sir William, and long before I had any idea who he was. It is very like *him*, too," she added, in a dreamy way; "poor man, it is very like *him*."

"But how do you know?" I asked. "He died centuries ago, didn't he?"

"Yes; but I saw him—saw him in this very library once," she added, as we entered the library. "It may seem strange to you," she went on, "but I have had experience of the near revelations of another world. Ask your dear Aunt Martha, some time; she has read the story. I 'believe in ghosts,' as people call it—in other words, in the nearness and reality of another world, and the possibility of being conscious of the presence of souls who are distant or who are gone. Some people call this being superstitious; but they don't think."

"I don't call it superstitious, Lady May," I said; "I am sure it is true. There have been strange things at Markland which make me believe it."

Lady May looked at me for a moment in a sweet strange way.

"Little sweet Lettice," she said, and put her arm round my waist and kissed me.

She was a wonderfully sweet woman.

We were soon in the new gallery, and very

beautiful it was. There were a few old pictures, but most of the Old Masters Sir William had removed to the church or the chapel, and the greater number were modern. Among them there was a lovely likeness of Lady May, which Sir William had painted himself years ago in Rome before they were married, and which was called "The Lyric Love."

I stopped for a moment to admire it, and I was struck by the look of sadness and tenderness which came over Lady May's face as she looked at the picture. I suppose it reminded her of something bringing pain and pleasure in the past. As we moved along the gallery I was thinking how wonderfully a young and pure heart keeps the beauty of youth in the face as years go on, and how strangely little years had told upon her, leaving the same lines of refinement, and the same tenderness and power about the eyes and lips, when I was suddenly arrested by a picture which made me start and catch at a chair beside me, as the blood seemed suddenly to rush to my heart.

It was the portrait of a young man, perhaps about eighteen or nineteen, in a strangely picturesque costume. He seemed to be a Roman *pifferaro*, and had on the rustic and beautiful dress of a Contadino of the Abruzzi. He stood before a shrine of Our Lady, behind which appeared a glimpse of a dome and campanile, and in the distance a line of misty hills. His *piffero* was in his right hand which had dropped to his side, but the face was turned from the shrine and was gazing out of the picture, and the eyes looking straight on the spectator. In fact I

quaked and shivered as I met his glance, eye to eye.

Lady May turned upon me and saw that something was wrong.

"What is it, my child?" she said kindly, for I felt so faint I suppose there was evidence of emotion in my face. "Something is paining you, come with me."

She led me out of the gallery and through the glass doors which led to the garden. There we sat down together on a rustic seat. How strangely little details write themselves upon one's mind when one is in trouble. I shall never forget the bright *blaze* of a hedge of monthly roses a little way before me, or the look of the bold front of Pendle Hill far away; or the sweeping fragrance of a wealth of sweet-smelling shrubs close by; or the painstaking ascents and descents of an industrious spider hard at work on a yellow cluster of banksias just above my head.

Why, in moments of real and deep emotion, does the mind fix itself so tenaciously upon some trifling fact?

I told Lady May that the picture of the *pifferaro* had startled me from its extraordinary likeness to Harry St. John. The same black curly hair; the same red lips and white teeth, and large grey eyes; the same unmistakable expression of simple truth and honesty, the same sunny sweetness over the whole countenance—all were there. One thing led on to another, and in the end I told her the whole story. No one could withstand Lady May. And, indeed,

it was a joy to me to tell her all. I asked her about the picture which had made so deep an impression upon me, and she told me that, oddly enough, it was a fancy portrait of Lord Markland, who was supposed to have been lost at sea. It was taken by Sir William Durrell some years before in Rome.

She passed, however, from the picture to my story, and here she made me tell her every detail. When I reached the final episode of the letter, she paused and thought for some time.

I was now kneeling beside her on a rug spread by the rustic seat. Her arm was round me, and at last I had my head upon her breast and my tears were flowing fast. It was a relief to tell her all, a relief to be allowed to cry it out in peace. Truth and sympathy are always blessed, and oh ! what rest I felt for the first time for many weeks in my talk to Lady May. Then at last she lifted up my face to her and looked with her clear strong loving gaze into my eyes.

"My little Lettice," she said, looking steadfastly at me, "don't you believe it ; don't you misdoubt him. Harry St. John never wrote that letter. I feel certain of it. Don't mistrust your old love till he tells you with his own lips—don't believe a word of it."

No words can ever say what such words were to me. How I blessed her ! How I loved her ! It was not merely the comfort of her words, but the fact that they came from *her*. Some souls you would never trust if they swore each syllable by the sacred Name. Some you trust so that they are not only *true* ; they are *prophetic*. Lady May was to me like

that. A great confidence stole over me—which has never since been shaken—that, *somehow or other*, her words were true; that though he might have written the letter, there was *some* way to account for it. We are strange creatures. When I thought it over, her confidence seemed groundless, and yet—then at least—she inspired me with it too.

We sat there for some time in silence. The wind went sighing through the pines with its strange music—the *psithurisma* of the old Greek poet—the shadows deepened across the lines of Pendle Hill; the bees had ceased their humming, and the flowers were closing for their evening sleep, when we rose to go. I see her now in her sweet soft beauty with that look of confidence and sympathy, as she clasped me to her heart and gave me a long loving kiss.

“Cheer up, my little one,” she said; “I, too, once went through many sorrows. Be brave and bright and faithful. I can’t but think all will be well at last.”

I was able again and again before leaving Stafferton to look at the beautiful portrait of the *pifferaro* with something like confidence and even joy.

III.

FROM Stafferton M’amie and I went to Ravensthorpe to be present at what they always called—in special memory of the celebrated Lady Dorothy—“the Angels’ Festival.” It was a happy time, for somehow in my own mind I was, oh! so much happier, and besides it would be difficult to be unhappy at Ravensthorpe. It was early in October when we

turned our faces southward, and getting on for the close of the month when once again we were settled at the Priory.

I have told how a new life of hope—even though a trembling hope—a shadowy hope—had been brought into my life, *à propos* of the *pifferaro* picture, and the loving sympathy of Lady May. I have now to tell some strange occurrences which somehow deepened my confidence that my fate was not so mournful—separating me from Harry St. John—as I had at first imagined. It was true, as I reflected in calmer moments, that Lady May's remark was a mere opinion, unsupported by evidence; still, whether it was that my heart was a bribed critic, or that there was something mysteriously powerful in the *way* in which she spoke, certain it is that I felt a confident conviction that things were not so bad as they looked between Harry and myself. And this conviction was strengthened in an odd and inconsequent manner, I grant, when Lady May sent me a very beautiful tinted photograph of the *pifferaro* picture with our own motto illuminated on the frame—*Spes in Domine Eterna*. That picture has never left me since, and it hangs before me now.

The remarkable thing on our return home was the changed attitude of Lady Trelorman. I have said that for long the relations between the two houses had not been cordial. My dear aunt, with her stern sense of right and wrong, had, from the memories of the past, looked upon Lady Trelorman as a wrongdoer. The fact, too, that she was in a sense an interloper had not improved matters. Lord Mark-

land had perished, so it was believed, at sea, and had left no heirs. It was well known that his unhappy relations with his father were in great measure due to his stepmother, and the fact that she enjoyed, for her life, the ancestral property of the Trelorman family, and that on her death all would probably come to her son, Mr. Berkeley, who had had no kind of connection with the county, had not tended to smooth matters down. Mr. Berkeley had not been often seen of late at Markland. It was said that he and his mother were not on cordial terms. Certain it is that Lady Trelorman had latterly lived at the Hall in great seclusion. Friends did visit her, but they were friends unknown to the neighbourhood, and my aunt's old-fashioned notions revolted against them as adventurers and *parvenus*. We had for long been on distant visiting terms and—except on the occasion of the memorable Christmas party, which I have already recorded—that was all, except that I had seen something of Lady Trelorman, for although not altogether popular among the poor, she had endeavoured, especially in later days, to be of use to the fishermen and their families. In my constant visits in the village I had again and again come across her, but our acquaintance scarcely went further than a formal bow or a few passing kindly words. The house where I most frequently met her was Felix the fisherman's. She seemed on very gracious terms with his wife, whom somehow I could never entirely trust; and Felix himself, who was my fast and unfailing friend, seemed to have a rooted mistrust of her ladyship.

I had noticed before we left the Priory this spring that Lady Trelorman was looking anxious and worried, and far from well. I had thought nothing of it, having other matters weighing upon me, but I had heard whispers among my poorer friends of perpetual change of servants at the Hall, and once or twice Felix had hinted to me that the Hall was "haunted," and that servants would not stay.

On my return, one of my first visits was to Felix and his family. Little Norah, who had been my maid, was now at home. Her sailor love had finally settled in the village. She had hopes now of soon being married, and I had, as before, done all I could to say a kind word for the young fellow, who had been among my class of fisher-lads, and of whom Father Philip held a high opinion. Norah's hopes seemed likely at last to be realized. Mrs. Fell—Felix's wife—was, as always, polite and respectful to me, but morose and chilly, but Felix had listened to his daughter's prayer and my many intercessions for the young couple. My aunt had with her usual kindness promised a small endowment in consideration of Norah's good conduct and faithful service, and Norah and her faithful Jim were at last to be married.

I had visited the cottage under the cliff to make some arrangements for the coming marriage, and to promise my services in any way in my power. It was a fine, chill clear afternoon towards the end of October. I had had a long talk to Norah on the subject of her wedding finery, and was taking my leave when Felix met me at the door.

"Dear heart," he said, touching his hat and

stopping ; " it is surely a sight for sore eyes to see you once again ; and how is her ladyship ? " (that was Aunt Martha) " and how's yourself ? Eh ! but miss, you do look pale and thin ; I declare you are breaking your young heart about Master Harry, bless him ! Never mind, he'll be home to you before long, the brave sailor that he is, and won't be likely to forget his sweetheart."

My confusion, which was deep enough to bring my blood to my temples, was covered by the sudden appearance of Mrs. Fell, Felix's wife.

" Hold your noise, you clattering seagull ! " she began. " Did ever anyone hear your like, as if my Lady would look at that young scapegrace of a sailor lad, come from no one knows where, and good for nothing but to chew tobacco and work wi' ropes and fishing tackle ? "

I don't know what the answer might have been, or where the altercation would have ended, for Felix looked as though he meant to show fight, and for me, anger was fast getting the better of embarrassment, when suddenly Lady Trelorman's carriage turned the corner and pulled up at the fisherman's door.

In another moment Felix was touching his hat with an ill-concealed scowl, his wife, all smiles of a most mechanical texture, was profuse in curtsies, and I began to hurry away with a cold parting bow. Lady Trelorman, however, waved to me to stop, and while I hesitated, her footman ran after me to beg me for a moment to speak to her ladyship. I returned towards the carriage from

which she had already alighted. As I approached her, I could not help being struck with her ghastly paleness. She was certainly a handsome woman, although her beauty was wanting in refinement. She was, as always, exceedingly well dressed, and she still bore herself with a stately and dignified air, as had always been the case. I could not, however, fail to notice a certain pathetic and *drawn* look in her face, and an expression of weariness and even wildness in her eyes, as of one who had long been a stranger to refreshing sleep.

She accosted me with unusual graciousness, inquired earnestly after my aunt, assured me of her pleasure at hearing that we had returned to the neighbourhood, and expressed some concern that I did not look so well as she would have wished to see me.

"My dear Miss Ferrers," she added, "I have not had the pleasure of seeing so much of you as I could have wished, but now that you have come home again I hope we shall be more to each other. I am a lonely woman"—and there was something really pathetic in the tone in which this was said which went to my heart. "Can I not persuade you to pay me a little visit at the Hall, you would be doing an act of charity? No; do not say 'No,'" she added, as I was about to answer. I have often heard of your goodness from my poor friends here. The rich are sometimes as much in need of counsel and comfort as the poor, and it would be a pleasure to me if I might hope to induce you to pay me a visit occasionally, of at least a few days."

The whole thing was so thoroughly unexpected and astonishing that I could not believe my ears. At the same time there was such a ring of sincerity and even pleading in the tone in which she spoke that Pity rose within me, and I could only answer kindly, and even cordially. I explained that I should like to be of any service to her, but that I seldom left my aunt, and was myself a very dull companion, as we lived, as she must know, a life of great retirement.

She refused, however, to be put off, and at last parted from me with extraordinary cordiality, assuring me that she would call upon my aunt on the earliest opportunity and renew her request.

IV.

It was a glorious afternoon ; one of those October days when Nature seems to pause and think with a long look behind to say farewell to summer, and a sad look before towards the winter that must come. I was glad and sad at once ; sad with that mysterious sadness which sometimes oppresses us at the thought of possible and unknown disaster ;—for human life is so full of possibilities of sorrow that there are times when, if we give the rein to dreams and fancies, we are oppressed with the sense of the untried and the unknown ;—and glad, with a deep though trembling hope which had risen in me from the words and look of that sweet Lady May. I was confused and astonished at Lady Trelorman's conduct. I longed to be alone, to calm myself and think, and I had a

sense of comfort and freedom at being near my old and loved confident and companion—the mysterious boundless sea. My watch told me there was still time for an active walker like myself, and instead of turning homewards up the valley, I determined to take the path by the cliffs.

Up the steep path I climbed. I suppose I hurried from my feverish excitement, for I was breathless when I reached the churchyard and determined to rest in the church for a moment before I moved through the Park by the longer pathway home. The church, as usual, was open. There was no one there. How still and beautiful it was! The lamps before the high altar were dimmed by the clear autumn radiance, and sparkled like jewels in the brightness of the sunlight. The pillars threw deep shadows. The great figures in the niches above the altar seemed living beings calmly meditating on the great things of Life and Death. I made my way to the Chapel of Help—The *Box sorrow*, as Father Philip called it,—rich with memorials of perished seamen who slept somewhere in ‘the wandering grave’ of the ocean, ‘all the sea gives up her dead.’ The great figures of the Guardian Angels and the Warrior Saints—St. Eustace, St. George, St. Adrian, St. Maurice—shone in the clear sunlight with perfect splendour. I knelt in peace gazing at the crucifix, and then with closed eyes, and no sound near me but the distant roll of the dreaming sea—prayed with all my heart for the seamen and sailors on the great deep, and especially and earnestly for one sailor boy. How can any soul in love and sorrow live without

prayer? The church, even with all its beauty, was lost to me for the moment, for fairer scenes were near. Thoughts poured upon me of a better country, of a Father's unflagging, penetrating care; of the great love of a Redeemer; of the sweet influence of "the loving Spirit who leads into the land of Righteousness." A voice seemed to say, "Cast *all* your care upon Him, for He careth for you." And then I cast it *all* with confidence, and rose from my knees in peace. Father Philip's often repeated words came back to me: "There is no science like the science of goodness. Trust God. Love goodness. Do duty. Flee from sin. You may suffer, but all will be well." I was turning to leave, calmed and strengthened, when the church door opened, and I heard some one enter. The footsteps I heard went toward the choir. Someone paused and knelt, and all was still. I glided quietly down the south aisle from the chapel, and then looked back across towards the chancel, and saw the kneeling figure. It was Father Philip. He had evidently returned from his parish wanderings, and I saw the light fall on the fine grey head as he knelt alone, interceding, I knew, for his people. What a comfort, I thought, to have a parish priest who taught the Faith, and believed, and lived it! And with all the quietness I could, not to disturb his devotions, I left the church noiselessly by the south door. It was only a step or two to the sea wall. I stood on the old stone seat, and gazed beyond. There it was all before me, dreaming in the soft sunlight, rolling in now against the cliffs with its slumberous music—my own beloved sea.

Expansion and distance lead the thoughts to Eternity. Men, the most "practical," they say, dream of it in the prairie and the pampas. All, at times, feel the glory and the restfulness of a stretch of starlit sky, but who ever *feels* the mystery and solemnity of the Infinite, like those who know and love the changing colour and the solemn music of the ever-changing sea?

The light was still clear and bright, though the sun was setting. I was bent on reaching once more the "Island," which never had I dared to visit, but once, since that evening—which now seemed so long ago—with Harry when he told me of his love the second time. I hurried away down the path and passed the woods. Away they lay to my right in the valley, in their autumn glories of crimson and gold. I was soon at the bottom of the path, and down on the sands. The tide was out, so, crossing the sands, I heard in the distance the quiet splash of the waves as they broke at the mouth of the little bay. It was no long labour to be up the path at the other side, and down on the bridge which joined the "Island" to the mainland; no long labour to climb the ridge and descend a little on the other side of the rocks which crowned the island, and to find myself on the very spot where he and I had sat together on that evening which I never can forget.

"Lettice," he had said—or something like that—"you cannot deny that you love me. I may be foolish, as you say, but at least you will think of me kindly when I am far away?"

Think of him kindly! Yes indeed! Now I was

alone. No one near me but my beloved sea. I sat and thought. The years seemed to come back upon me one by one. My first memories came fresh, more fresh than they ever were before. That awful night which I remembered so dimly, the awful vision on the Monk's Cliff, the poor dead lady, the strange things said which I only just remembered and scarcely understood; my mother's tenderness, and then her long silence; my father's love, and then his death; then the sweet image of my dear loving M'amie—and I thanked God she was with me still;—my eager hopes, and dim imaginings of *how* to be of use in the world, but over all and through all the bright boyish face and earnest eyes of one who had been the playmate of my childish years, who afterwards had told me he loved me, and whom now I knew I loved more than all the world. Where was he? Should I ever see him again? What was the meaning of all the mystery? What the explanation of that cruel letter? My tears flowed fast, for no one was near to see me, except my old companion, the boundless sea—but they were not all tears of sorrow. "Truth, and duty, and strength, must conquer all things," I said; and speaking to the sea, I said, "I will do my duty, and be true and strong," and sweet Lady May's words came back to me—"My little Lettice, don't you believe it, don't you misdoubt him. Harry St. John never wrote a line of that letter." How I blest her for saying it, and I turned to the sea which had listened to us two once from that headland, and said quietly, "I will not mistrust him."

The tide had been rising, and as I paused on the bridge for a moment, the waves were dashing in impotent fury on the rocks below. I hurried on. The lights were beginning to glimmer in the cottages at Torth, as I crossed the sands and gained the opposite cliffs. The autumn day had fallen. M'amie would be anxious. I hurried along the churchyard cliff. Turning to look at the Monk's Rock, I thought I saw a pale and shadowy image of the dreaded storm wraith on the headland. A few drops of rain were falling. I redoubled my speed; a sort of terror was coming over me at even the shadow of that awful vision. Glad indeed I was when at last the Priory gate was reached. The wind was moaning. A distant roar from the ocean came along the fitful blasts. The calmness of the peaceful day had ended. There was a sound of anger from the ocean. There was a coming storm.

V.

IT came. That night was a night of tempest. I found dear M'amie in great uneasiness; but I told her exactly—not indeed mentioning my meditations—where I had been. It was sweet to be with her again, in her own little sitting-room and feel safe in her care and tenderness; for we both knew that the night which was beginning would be a gruesome night on the coastland and the sea.

Indeed it was an awful night, even to us who, ever

living by the ocean, were used to storms. Many a night I had loved to hear the dashes of pitiless rain on the window panes and to listen to the roar of the wind. But to-night as the tempest rose higher and louder I was too uneasy and restless for sleep. Perhaps it was the disturbing result of the unrestful thoughts which had haunted me for so many weeks ; perhaps the startling effect of the pale vision of the storm wraith the day before and the unexpected rise of the gale. The night seemed *alive* to me ; presences everywhere, mysterious and threatening and sad. Then, though my common sense told me that the storm was in all probability very partial, I could not help thinking fearfully of Harry out and away on the wide sea. We—by the brink of the ocean—learn to pray for sailors, but that night I fear my thoughts and prayers were less than they should have been with the poor fellows out in channel, and much with one sailor, sailing I knew not where. Our imagination I suppose, as I have said before, is the home of fear, and its cruel inflictions can only be conquered by vigorous and regulated hope. That night I could not hope, I could not sleep, I was feverish and miserable and filled with unaccountable alarm. At last the mere tossing from side to side became intolerable, and I rose and knelt on a chair in the deep bay window and looked out into the night. The wind was rising and rising to a perfect hurricane. Just now overhead the sky was fairly clear, but there were wild scudding clouds, and every now and then a rush of furious rain. Far away there was inky blackness towards the

horizon, broken only now and then by zigzags of lightning, and sometimes through the screeching of the wind one could hear the peals of the distant thunder. From my room, which was high up, I could see the top of the church tower, and in the dip between the headlands the white breakers far out on the sea. To the right above the church tower now and again a dark shadow seemed to rise for a moment and then sink and fade. At that distance it could not be seen distinctly, even in the flashes of the lightning, or against a clear patch of sky opened up when the clouds were torn into shreds by the gale ; but I knew it was the storm wraith, and shuddered as I thought of the popular belief that it portended something strange to the owners of the Abbey lands.

VI.

THE night had been terrible, but it passed without any special event, except the weariness and sorrow in my own torn heart. It was decided that I should go the following afternoon and spend a couple of nights with her ladyship. I cannot say that I altogether liked the prospect. I had seldom been away from M'amie for even a night. There was something mysterious in Lady Trelorman's altered look and manner. Something about her certainly and instinctively repelled me, something also attracted me, and she moved me to pity by her look of restlessness and even misery.

I reached the Hall in time for dinner. The night was dark and stormy, and the fine entrance hall looked warm and inviting, with its large wood fire and brilliant lamps. I had seldom crossed the threshold before, and never had I dined there. The dignity of the house struck me. It was so much larger than our Priory, and its adornments and furniture far superior in lavish beauty. I found Lady Trelorman awaiting me in a small cosy sitting-room, and she welcomed me with great cordiality. She thanked me warmly for coming, said she had not been well, had been feeling lonely and out of spirits. Her son, she said, had not been able to visit her lately, as he had many things to detain him elsewhere. Markland was so remote, she said, that it was difficult to induce visitors to come to such a distant place, and so on.

"And then, my dear Miss Ferrers, we are such near neighbours, that we ought to cheer one another. Our families were formerly so friendly. It is time surely to renew the friendships of the past. It is good of your dear aunt to spare you, and I hope we shall be very happy together and soon be friends."

This was all said with an attempt at brightness and checriness which struck me as being strangely unreal. And throughout our talk at dinner, chiefly on the late storm and on the way we had spent the summer and our visit to Stafferton, I was more and more impressed with a conviction, that *behind* her conversation, and remote from the immediate subject before us, her mind was really taken up with some-

thing else. She became keen and animated on one subject only, and that was on the ghostly legends which hung round the story of Stafferton. She asked me had I seen any apparitions there, and I felt that whilst she assumed an air of amused incredulity on the subject, it was only *assumed*.

I warmly argued in favour of the possibility of apparitions; assured her that most certainly such had, so I had heard from my aunt, been seen in the past, both at Stafferton and at Ravensthorpe, that both were traceable to crimes committed in life, and that all such had passed away because real reparation had been made, and those who had come after were sincerely religious and really good.

We were in her pretty drawing-room after dinner when the discussion took place about Stafferton.

"Come and sit by me, child, by the fire and warm yourself," she said, and in saying so she motioned me to sit at her feet. She drew me towards her as I sat on the footstool by her, and placed her arm round my neck so that my head rested on her knees.

"Tell me, child," she said, "for you are good and loving, *can* reparation be made for what is wrong? *Can* the dead be brought to rest if there has been sin or trouble in life?"

Her voice was strangely earnest and weary, and it seemed to me odd that she should speak in this way after having only a few moments before pretended to disbelieve in the whole thing.

I said what I could, what I had heard Father Philip say as to the possibility of repentance in this life, and as to cases in which the dead seemed at

last to rest, if crimes or sorrows which disturbed them were undone by the living so far as they could.

As I talked she hung over me and drew me closer to her and listened with such deep attention, that you might have thought I was saying something of extraordinary value.

"You do not shrink from me," she said, and she smoothed my hair and caressed it, and I felt her tremble and shiver.

"Dear Lady Trelorman," I said, "why should I shrink from you?"

"Because I am so miserable—because I am so wicked. Everyone else shrinks from me. No one loves me. No one in the wide world, not even Edward (that was her son), for whom I have done so much."

Her voice had grown soft and sorrowful, quite unlike its usual tone. Then, suddenly, she seemed to recover herself.

"What nonsense I am talking!" she said. "My child, it is bed-time, I must not keep you up. What would your aunt say if I allowed you to waste the drowsy hours?"

Her voice had now again got that forced and unnatural tone which it had lost for a time. She was a strange woman. I could not understand her.

She kissed me kindly, and then the bell was rung and lights were brought by a footman, and we went upstairs together. She accompanied me to my room and hoped I would be comfortable, and bade me "good-night."

VII.

THE room in which I slept I must describe minutely, for it made an impression upon me so painful and terrible, that to this day, though I have known it under such altered conditions, it gives me a touch of fear. It was a lofty room and long. On the right on entering was a high old-fashioned fireplace. Beyond this and against the end wall of the room was a very large high four-post bed. Round the top of the bedstead ran a gilded cornice, and at the foot in the centre of the cornice was a coronet. Opposite the fireplace were three deep windows, looking out towards the broad clumps of trees which rose round the house between it and the headland that overhung the sea. There was a dado of old-fashioned carved wood with odd figures on it round the walls, and above the dado a strange paper with quaint figures of birds and trees upon it. The hangings were of odd and old-fashioned chintz. Opposite the bed, but in the corner at the further end of the room, was a door. I ought to add, it was in the old and lonely part of the house. We had crossed that wonderful bridge to reach it, and it was beyond the great tower.

Everyone dislikes a door in their room in a strange house, I should think, that leads they don't know where. I was determined to find where *this* led to, and I took my candle and tried the door. It opened and led into a small dressing-room, from which another door led to the landing at the head of the great staircase, which commanded that part of the

house. This was locked and the key on my side, so now I had satisfied myself completely that all in this direction was clear. I closed the door again, and when I had undressed and put on my dressing-gown I said my prayers, and then sat down in one of the great arm-chairs by the fire to warm my feet and brush out of my hair—and dream!

I thought much of Lady Trelorman and our strange conversation. That she had done many wrong things I feared, both because I had always heard that my father and my aunt disapproved of her, and because why should she be so unhappy and strange if she was a penitent sinner and loved God? The more I thought of it the more I felt sure she had some great trouble on her mind. And then it came to me, almost as if a voice had spoken it, that I was sent to help her. I did not see how I was to do it, but I felt more and more sure that it must be done. Then I knelt down again and prayed and prayed that if there were sin or trouble which made her so unhappy, I might help her to get free from it. It seemed to me so tragic. There she was, so rich, so lovely even in her increasing years, and so unhappy! And she had come and sought me out. "You do not shrink from me, my child," she had said. "Everyone shrinks from me. No one loves me." How terrible it sounded! I had had a lonely sort of life, but then I had dear M'amie's love, and my dear father's love, which I was sure was as really mine now that he was beyond the grave as it had been when he was here. Then Norah loved me, and old Felix. And Lady May had been so

loving to me ; and then Harry had *said* he loved me, and one thing was certain—though I hardly dared to whisper it to myself—I loved him. And dear Father Philip loved me, that I knew, like his own child, even though in his great manly heart he loved everyone. How terrible to have “no one to love you,” “not even Edward,” she said. I leant my elbows on my knees and gazed into the fire and thought of this poor, lonely, miserable woman, and wondered could I, who knew so little of life, and the world, and sin and trouble, help her. Surely I was meant to help her, or why did she take to me so ? The only way must be to love her. It is, I suppose, the real way, the only way to help anyone. I am sure I have often heard Father Philip say it was the golden key that unlocks every door. And then as I watched the fire and thought and thought, I remembered “Love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.” And then I knelt down again and prayed, and prayed that I might love her and help her so. And as I prayed the strange repulsion which I *had* felt—though I *had* felt an attraction too—seemed to melt away and die, and I felt a vast pity rise up in me for one so unhappy who had, as she said, no one to love her.

The wind had been rising as the night wore on, for it must have been a long time since I had come to my room. I went to the window and looked into the night. It was not *quite* dark, for behind the clouds there was a moon, but the clouds were dark, though they were flying, and the moonlight was not clear. I saw the trees tossing and swaying as they were

"caught and cuffed" by the gale. I saw the line of cliffs, beyond which I knew was the ocean, and I heard the distant roar of the sea. I shuddered to think of the wild night for the sailors, and knelt down to say again my usual prayer for them, and to remember Harry again. The fire was getting very low when I rose from my knees. I was chilly and tired. One's feelings and thoughts lift one up and carry one for a time, and then they lay one down again and leave one, and one finds oneself too weak and lonely to go on. "But God does not leave one," I said aloud to comfort myself, and I crept into bed.

I do not know how long I slept, for at last sleep I did, but I woke at last from a disturbing dream. I dreamt that someone came to me—a girl dressed in black and with golden hair—and begged me to pray for her husband and son. She said they had been wronged, cruelly wronged, and she clasped her hands so beseechingly, I rose to pray. As I knelt and put my hands upon the bed, they seemed to touch a dead body, cold and clammy with the waters of the sea. The shock of the cold touch awoke me, and I started up in bed. It was only a dream, a horrid dream—and I lay down and tried to calm myself and shake it off.

The fire was out, the wind was wailing and the rain came driving in fierce gusts against the window-pane. But in the pauses of the wind I heard distinctly someone move in that dressing-room. I had examined that dressing-room. I knew the outer door was locked. There could be no one there. I sat up and listened—it was all a fancy. I lay down

and tried to calm myself, for I had become terribly excited, and at last, after repeating the Psalms—I am used to say in going to sleep the 51st, the 130th, the 23rd—for myself and the Living and the Dead, I grew more calm. Then suddenly I was startled again. Someone moved, not now in the dressing-room, but *in my room*, at the foot of my bed! I was sure of it, and I rose up to look. A dark figure for a moment—I felt certain—stood between me and the window on the right side of my bed. There was not much light, but light enough to notice the deeper darkness of the figure, darker than the darkness of the night. I gazed in real fear, and it was gone. Perhaps it was a vast mistake, I argued with myself. I made up my mind to be calm and self-controlled, and to shake off this odious, haunting nightmare, and at last I partly succeeded. I do not know how long all this had taken. It could not have been long, but to me it seemed an age. At last I did overcome myself and fell into a quiet sleep.

And now this happened. I was wakened by a feeling of creeping horror. The very hair was rising on my head. It was this feeling that waked me, I did not feel it *after* awaking. *It awaked me.* And now a verse I remembered somewhere in the Bible came into my mind—"A spirit passed before me and the hair of my head did rise," or something like that. The words had scarcely crossed my mind when I saw now plainly bending over me the dark figure of the girl. It was the girl of my dream. I do not know whether it was the moonlight that broke forth, or what the light was, but this I know, I plainly

saw her. She leant over me with clasped hands. Her face was pale and pleading, and she had a shock of golden hair. I gazed in dumb astonishment for a moment and my very heart stood still, and then I spoke. I tell you what I did, I made the sign of the Cross and I said, "Oh! speak and tell me why you are pleading, or if you will not speak, then, in the name of God do not disturb the living." She was gone. I sank back on my pillows, to tell the truth, more dead than alive. It was long before I could calm myself again. My heart was flying, and I was trembling from head to foot. I slept no more that night, but lay awake and watched and prayed. Gradually I recovered calmness, but I did not recover sleep. It was a long waiting for the grey dawn of the November morning, for just after this second apparition the clock struck two.

VIII.

I SUPPOSE I was looking pale and tired when I breakfasted with Lady Trelorman in the morning. She asked me—I thought, in a strange way, with an odd and anxious look—whether I had passed a quiet night. I was far too perplexed at my experiences to speak of them to her, at least, till I had thought the matter out. There was something in the expression of the face of my sad, ghostly visitant that impressed me, and haunted me, which shall be explained by-and-by. I did not choose to speak of it to Lady Trelor-

man. I was determined that she should first speak to me. There are times when you feel others must speak first, or they shall not have your confidence. I was sure there was some mystery about the house which needed explanation, but I was full of pity for her; that she had done some wrong which haunted her, I had not the shadow of a doubt, but I was full of sorrow for her and pity. I had made up my mind to be loving and to help her, and I only prayed to be guided and to be wise. I merely said in answer to her inquiries that the night was a stormy and uneasy night—which was true—and that I was tired and had not slept well.

That day I lived like someone in a dream. She would not let me leave her. Her usual manner wore off, and all day she had the same gentle, piteous, pleading manner which she had shown by the fire-side the night before. We drove out together for an hour in the afternoon, but we went in the direction of Lawgan and not towards home. I knew that M'amie had settled for me to sleep two nights at the Hall, and though the prospect of another night was far from pleasant to me, I determined not to depart from the arrangement, but to see the matter to the end. I read aloud to Lady Trelorman in the late afternoon while she lay upon the sofa. She told me she was ill, "very ill," she said, and that when I returned to the Priory the following day she had made up her mind to go up to London to consult her doctor. She was certainly a woman of strong determination, for, except when we were alone, she went about in her usual way, but when alone she seemed to care no longer to

keep up appearances, and had all the looks and ways of a suffering invalid.

After afternoon tea, she retired for an hour to rest, and I fell into a quiet sleep in the armchair by her sitting-room fire. I was tired out with my experience of the past night and the dread of the night that was to come, and I was glad enough to sleep until I was awakened to prepare for dinner.

The evening was a quiet one. The storm had died away. We had no conversation of any kind worth relating that evening. Lady Trelorman seemed to be more peaceful and less unhappy. She lay on her sofa and complained of feeling very unwell. She would have me sit by her, and made me tell her much of our life at the Priory, of M'amie's work among the sailors, of her little orphanage, and of Father Philip, about whose kindness and goodness I was always ready enough to talk.

I was in no hurry for bedtime; but like other trying ordeals, bedtime *would* come. I confess it was with some uneasiness I went to my room that night. I said my prayers, and read my Bible, and my little Thomas à Kempis, and then, wrapping myself in my dressing-gown, sat down by the fire. One thing I could not do, I could not go to bed. That bed was an object of horror to me, and nothing would have induced me to lie down upon it. I sat and read, or tried to read, and from time to time made up the fire. The clock struck one at last, and time went on; it must be getting near two. I had remembered hearing that hour strike the night before.

It was growing towards two when again I heard

a movement in the dressing-room. In another instant the same sad figure was gliding across the floor towards the bed. Her hands were clasped, her face was deadly pale, her forehead was crowned with masses of golden hair. She paused by the bed with clasped hands, turned away, returned again, and then glided past me to the door and vanished. I had been transfixed, partly indeed with horror, but partly with another feeling. The expression which struck me the night before riveted me now. I had never seen that same beautiful look on any face *but one*. Harry, my beloved sailor's hair was coal black and hers was golden, but there was a look in her face unmistakably like him. I could make no mistake about it. The night before, I had thought that I had transferred to this spectral face an expression ever vivid in my thoughts. To satisfy myself on this point was, I think, the power that nerved me to spend another night in that room at all. I was certain of it now. There was no mistaking it, and a conviction came over me which was clear and strong, that Harry St. John's mother had appeared to me from the dead. This all passed through my mind in a second, although it takes so long to tell. I seized my candle and followed and opened the door.

And now I was sure I saw the figure with clasped hands flit down the stairs. Onward it moved along the great corridor, and I hurried on. We crossed the bridge. We descended the inner staircase. I saw the gleam of light upon the moat, on we went. The library door stood open and I followed still.

Beyond the library was a pretty boudoir with three windows opening down to the ground. The form passed on before me into the boudoir and in a moment I was there.

I can hardly describe what I saw. It passed, I suppose, in a second or two, but it seemed so long. To my amazement Lady Trelorman herself was seated at the further end of the boudoir, leaning back, ghastly pale, in a chair near the fireplace. The further window, formed of two glass doors, was wide open. An old man, with an expression of face which made one shudder at its diabolical expression of rage, stood by the open window, and pointed with a long lean finger out into the night. The poor girl turned towards him with her clasped hands, but his unrelenting finger pointed on. She flitted past him and for a moment he seemed to follow, then to my horror turned, walked back across the room towards Lady Trelorman, and *with a laugh, a fiendish laugh* which fills me still with horror when I recall it, vanished from my sight! I sank on a seat by the door where I was standing, I just remember seeing Lady Trelorman spring towards me, and I remember no more.

When I became conscious again—for in fact I had fainted—Lady Trelorman was kneeling by me chafing my temples, and applying restoratives. I was soon myself. I had never fainted in my life before, and I was already indignant at myself for having done so then; but the shock had been extreme.

I was roused, too, to exert myself by a strange wistful expression on her face as she looked at me for a moment, and said,—

"Lettice, darling, tell me you saw *them*?"

"*Them*, yes," I said, "certainly. What can you mean by such a question?"

"Oh! my God," she said, not answering me, but raising her arms and stretching out her hands, "then it is true, it is not a dream!" And then burying her face in her hands she murmured, "Oh! my God, how bitter are the wages of sin."

Weak and unstrung as I was I was roused to exertion by her misery. She was kneeling on the floor beside me, her beautiful grey hair (for it was beautiful) fell over her shoulders, and her face was buried in her hands.

I put my arms round her and kissed her poor grey head. "The wages of sin is death," I murmured mechanically; "but the gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord." I don't know why I said it, I hardly knew what I was saying. I had mechanically caught up her phrase and hoped to comfort her.

She raised her head from her hands and looked at me. The tears were streaming down her cheeks, but I was struck even then by her look. It was a beautiful face. There was a soft sorrowful look in the eyes which is one of the loveliest lights ever seen in this world—the light of real love and sorrow. She looked at me through her tears. My prayer was answered, I loved her. A deeper soul was wakened beyond the dreadful mass of sin. She gazed at me so for a moment and then threw her arms round my neck and clasped me convulsively to her heart.

"Oh, my darling, my Lettice, my sweet child, I love you! You, you only in the world have given

me hope! Then, my God, oh! perhaps I may be forgiven and the dead may rest!"

I let her sob her heart out as she knelt by me, and only kissed her poor grey hairs.

Then she brushed back her hair from her temples and made me lay my head on the soft silk pillows of the couch while she knelt on.

"Listen for a moment, my child," she said, "I am glad you have seen it all. I am sorry that you should have suffered, seeing it, but it is better so; you will understand the rest, and some day you will be better able to make *him* understand—I mean to make *him*—Harry—

I started and gasped for breath at this strange speech, but she went on:

"You shall hear it all by-and-by, not now, not now—but *now*, *now*—without another delay I begin my confession—I begin my act of reparation.

"Of course I know, my child, that you love Harry and that he loves you."

"Oh! don't, Lady Trelorman," I began. "Oh! don't, don't—"

"No! Don't interrupt me," she said, "it must be said. I have injured *you*, and I begin the undoing of my crimes, which you say is possible, with you. When you have heard all, I hope you will be able to forgive me. I only now say what must be said at once. I have wronged *you*. I have wronged *you*. I *will* confess all, yes, all in every particular, only *do* love me, for I love you. Your love is my only hope. I did the wrong, I shall do the right, God helping me, and"—she lowered her voice—"and they

shall rest." You shall hear it all, my child, by-and-by. I could not rest till I told you just this. If repentance is possible for such as I am," she said so softly and humbly it went to my heart, "then the first thing is now at once to acknowledge the wrong. I wronged *u* among others. You have been loving to me and saved me, so I have confessed to you now. Oh! *you* will not cease to love me. I add only one thing more now. He who is called Harry St. John is Markland's son, he is, by right, Earl of Trelorman."

She stopped and pressed me to her heart. It was a strange scene. I looked round the room again for the first time; there were four candles lighted, two on different tables, and my bedroom candle where I had laid it down, on a table by the door. The glass doors were shut. The room looked quiet and bright as if it had never been the scene of such an extraordinary drama. I suppose she saw my half-frightened look, and my survey of the room, for she said,—

"No, darling, *they* will not come again to-night. I hope—I think—they never will again. You said the living might undo much wrong which may affect the dead. *I* lighted these candles," she added. "*I* imagined—one does—one can bear it better in the light. *I* shut these doors. No power could ever keep them shut at that hour for years. I think they will not open now. Lettice darling," she added after a pause, "you know something of my sin; you shall know all; say you will never forsake this wicked old woman, say you will love

her, and she will believe God may forgive and the dead may rest."

"Dear Lady Trelorman"—I could not imagine what she meant—"Dear Lady Trelorman," I said, "I do love you." It was true, and she pressed me again to her heart. We put the lights out and went quietly back to the room where I had been so terrified. I had no terror now. A great peace had fallen upon me. She made me lie down quietly on that bed which I had not yet occupied through that eventful night, and kissed me, and I felt her hot tears upon my face, and soon I was in a quiet sleep.

IX.

THE following morning I returned to the Priory, and Lady Trelorman went up to London. We had agreed that for the moment it would be better for me to be silent, and accordingly I did not tell anything of my extraordinary experience to M'amie. I talked to her generally of my visit, and spoke even more than before of the favourable impression made upon me by Lady Trelorman. All the same, M'amie was not blind. She was uneasy, and *said* I looked pale and *scared*! As to Lady Trelorman, from that night onwards she seemed to me to be a changed woman. There was a sweetness and calmness about her when we met in the morning for a moment; and we parted with real tenderness. I had often heard Father Philip say that our Lord taught that signs and

wonders could not *convert* souls, but might *awaken* and point them towards another world. This, in the case before me, was certainly true. I do think the awful apparitions which must have clouded the poor lady's life, *did* turn her mind more persistently to the seriousness of life, but her evidently real *penitence* came from something very different. It was strange what a tender affection she had for me ; and it was sweet, quite unspeakably sweet, to feel—as I felt, even then, in a vague and indistinct way—that by that affection she had been led on to the love of goodness, to the love of God, and to real sorrow for sin and change of heart.

Michael Angelo is said to have declared that in a rough and weather-stained, and apparently faulty block of marble there was an imprisoned angel, and that he, by his chisel, was to set him free ; and certainly in a rough and even injured human soul there is often some undying beauty if by love and penitence it may be brought to light. Here was a very mixed character indeed, but a character with much in it of nobility and truth, which had fallen terribly under stress of temptation, and yet terrible as the fall was, there was the possibility of change.

Lady Trelorman stayed in London over Christmas. She was very ill, and it was necessary that she should be near the best physicians. We corresponded constantly. Somehow I had—I think it was God's gift in answer to my prayer—a real love for her, and it was to her a very great relief to have some one to whom she could write with perfect freedom. Is it not so with us all ? Is not life a different matter, if

we can *trust* and open our hearts in the security of a real love? However, she told me that she was making every *legal* arrangement for righting all that had been wrong, and preparing gradually a statement of the whole circumstances, which was meant for *me*. This she said, when I received it, I might show to Father Philip, and that some day, when she was gone, I might leave it all on record, as I am doing now, for those who come after. I had not then the least idea what she meant, but I knew *something* was to come.

Meantime, I had had very little idea how the shock of the past few weeks had told upon myself. But dear M'amie, who was always watching over me with unflagging and unselfish tenderness, had noticed it. I was not feeling well. I had lost my old *spring* and strength, and, do what I would to resist it, I was down-hearted and dejected, and found the effort to be bright and cheerful almost too much.

When M'amie once made up her mind, she was very distinct and decisive; accordingly—as I had felt ill, and as I knew that she noticed it—I was not surprised one day by her announcement, that she meant to leave England the following week, and would be abroad for about six months.

I was really glad. There are times when it seems impossible to rally in the place where you have had a great shock. You may bear and “rub along,” but *rally* you can't. I felt to be away from all old associations would be a real joy.

X.

I CAN never look back upon this time without blaming myself much. Dear M'amie was so utterly unselfish, and—like people who are unwell without being exactly ill, I was—I now think—very selfish indeed. However, we spent Christmas—of all places in the world—in Munich! I had a fancy for it, and I think that dear M'amie, although she found it chilly, stayed for my sake. The Vierjahrzeiten Hof was more than comfortable, but the weather was gloomy and cold. I don't know why I liked it, but I did. A man of great eminence was lecturing at the time, and we with some friends were admitted to hear him, and allowed, as we had introductions, to make his acquaintance. He was very attractive. His strong rugged nature, his perfect simplicity, his immense learning, and his complete *grasp* of the Catholic Faith, without a touch of any Roman narrowness or bitterness, made him more interesting to me than any man I have ever met.

We left Munich at the end of January, crossed the Brenner to Verona, and then made for the Riviera. We hovered about from place to place from Spezia down to Viareggio and Leghorn, and up again to Genoa, Nice, and Villafranca, stopping—for that was what both of us loved—at retired little places along that enchanting coast—the most enchanting was Porto Fino—until we had reached the end of April, and then determined to return to England by way of Provence.

I had entirely recovered, and it was a real happi-

ness to me to see how very much my dear aunt had benefited by the change. For my part, I was now longing to be at Markland, but M'amie had set her heart on visiting Avignon. She was a great student of history, and she had never seen the city of the Popes during what was called in the phraseology of the time "the Babylonish Captivity."

We went by way of Toulon and made our way to Arles. Toulon, except for its splendid harbour, I suppose few people would care to visit. We liked it, however, exceedingly. M'amie was a delightful companion. Most Englishwomen of her age and rank are so entirely the victims of habit and unwritten law, that when they travel, they never see anything really at all! She and I visited all sorts of things. We poked about the narrow streets, and amused ourselves at bookstalls, and visited innumerable churches and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We must have produced a funny impression. Dear M'amie, as usual, had her black silk gown, her white soft shawl, and old-fashioned bonnet; but then, within it, was that wonderful sweet white face! We were attended by a footman and maid. The footman's views I never learnt, but our maid—a very bright, clever, cheery and rather handsome little woman—gave me a *réchauffé* each night—to my infinite amusement—of the impressions of the day. Do *men* ever enjoy the delights of evening parliaments? I suppose they do, in a foolish manner, over their pipes!

We reached Arles in the late hours of a beautiful May night. I had telegraphed for rooms in the Hôtel du Nords, and we were driven up in a rather

lumbering omnibus through the quaint and narrow streets to find supper prepared for us in the pretty quaint old rooms which had been allotted to our use. The following morning was a Sunday, and never shall I forget the buzz of the *Place des Hommes*, which awoke me from pleasant dreams. It was well called *Place des Hommes*. Men from the country places in all the variety of picturesque costume of Provence here were assembled in multitudes. It is their custom on a Sunday morning to meet their friends and talk. Women are said to *talk*, but never have I heard such a stormy beehive as in that square full of *men* !

M'amie and I had a happy day at Arles that Sunday ; indeed I dwell upon it, because it marked another epoch in my story. We had determined to go to the morning Mass at St. Trophimus. Anyone more keen than M'amie about visits to public places abroad I have never seen. She never seemed to tire ; and with all her sturdy love for the Anglican part of the Catholic Church, all mere narrowness and Protestant superstition—which so much blights the Christian life of many church people in England even now—were so alien to her sweet Christian nature that it was a joy to be with her at any religious function. About her there was nothing petty or narrow ; she was a real Catholic.

The Church of St. Trophimus is exceedingly interesting. The great western doorway dates from the early part of the thirteenth century, and is consequently extremely beautiful, but the church itself is much older. It is said to have been founded

by Saint Vigilius as early as the seventh century, and it was consecrated under the invocation of St. Stephen. About the middle of the twelfth century the name was changed upon the translation of the body of St. Trophimus.

Inside, alas, the seventeenth century has done its work, and though not wanting in dignity, it has suffered from the introduction of a pseudo-Greek style. The really beautiful parts of the church are the western portico with its splendid columns and quaint and dramatic sculptures, and the perfectly exquisite cloister, which is a most moving example of the work of the first period of the fourteenth century.

The church was well filled when we reached it. We were—as I find always is the case abroad—treated with kindness and welcomed as members of the Christian family. We were not looked at askance as “strangers” who might be taking other people’s seats! I suppose, even after all efforts made to the contrary—it is difficult for us English people, as we live upon an island, to think even of the church as being anything else but *Our* “pet preserve.” What shall we do with our silly exclusiveness when introduced to Mount Zion into which “all nations” are to flow? What *shall* we do when “there shall be no more sea”?

The Mass was stately and solemn: and it was sweet to feel, as one does in Provence and in many of the southern provinces of France, the *real* spirit of *devotion*. You are always told that *men* never go to church in France. I have been wicked enough sometimes to wonder why *men’s* souls are thought to be so valuable, and why it may not be

true—*pace* certain Mahometans—that *women* also have souls! However, *men* there were in number at St. Trophimus, and women too!—Women too! When the Mass was over, and we were sitting quietly taking note of things, I was perfectly startled by the beauty of the women. It has, of course, been noted again and again, but I had forgotten that *this* was a “note” of the place. The church, as they sat, or knelt, or passed in and out was a picture because of their astonishing beauty!

About the beauty of these women there was something Eastern, *and* Spanish, *and* Greek—and yet all their own. The hair was usually like ebony in blackness, the forehead and face like a soft-toned ivory. Every feature was chiselled as if by a master; and the suppleness of form, and dignity and yet *spring* in movement were simply arresting. They looked like *born* Roman Patricians, and the expression of the face was tender and determined, and overshone with a sweet suppressed joyousness. I have seldom seen anything so beautiful and dignified. It was not in the case of *one*. They were *all* more or less of the same stately type. Their simple costume also set off their radiant beauty. Some, of course, we saw dressed, alas! in the latest Parisian *mode*. These were usually wives or daughters of Prefects or city officers, and had unfortunately imbibed a touch of the vulgarity of their class; as everything gets a touch of vulgarity and ugliness which touches that most low and pretentious and vulgar and ugly of all things—the modern French Republic! Most, however, had on the black gown, and white handkerchief,

and black lace mantilla of Provence, and they were really dignified and beautiful.

We had meant to leave the church after the High Mass, but on going towards the western door we found an Assembly of Guilds with their banners, preparing to come in. It was a festival for various societies, and I persuaded M'amie to return with me and wait for their Mass.

The church had filled rapidly, so we humbly took our places on the pulpit steps! Soon, a dignified and kindly Canon took compassion upon us, and beckoned us off to more satisfactory seats in the nave. I could not help noticing with pleasure what an impression dear old M'amie always made. Her plain black gown, her white soft shawl, her little arrangement of soft white *tulle* about her neck, her old-fashioned bonnet—in fact her Quaker-like simplicity—combined with her tall and commanding figure, her stately gait, and the sweet dignity of the old, white, beautiful face—always attracted attention and respect!

We took our seats, and the Mass began. It was a striking scene. It was so simple, so, real, so dignified. The French, I think, when really *good* are so attractive! There is a delicacy, a poetry, a sweet grace about their religion which is charming. We English are good, but very often we are so wanting in the beautiful touches of a sense of the supernatural world. It seems to me we are never quite so bad as *bad* French people, but seldom so attractive as the *good*. Or is it the result of a special state of things? Is it true that the Anglican part of the Catholic

Church makes a good average level of decent religion : while the Roman part, if it makes great sinners, makes also great saints ? Who knows ?

However the Mass began, and it was most remarkable. To me it was delightful, but then I have a large infusion of Celtic blood. To most English people it might have been interesting as a spectacle, but at best would have fed our large supply of insular scorn, at worst convinced us (more than ever if wrapped in the clouds of superstitious Protestantism) that Divine Revelation was specially given to these islands ! It is rather wicked of me saying this—for I love my own people—but a real British Protestant does awake my scorn, he is so impenetrably stupid ! However, it was a strange and interesting service. It was a Low Mass, and the celebrant was a most devout priest. All through, however, there was an accompaniment on a band. The strings were admirable, and the music most pathetic, but it was so utterly *French* ! Immediately after an “Agnus Dei” came “The Last Rose of Summer !”

I had rather have our own more solemn ways at home, when the English Church is really true to herself, and the music is worthy of the great celebration, but the difference in national temper is shown in this treatment of the service. We—if true Catholics—are thankful if men *believe* in their Prayer-book, and act accordingly. Then they fall into their places, and the whole thing is really devout. After all, what we want, I suppose, is, not to be bound hand and foot by a tradition of Puritanism and Prose, but to be thankful for anything which helps our church

to realize the beauty and reality and nearness of another world.

That Mass helped *me*. And I knew it was with an unusual sense of comfort and confidence that I offered my prayers along with the great "sacrifice of our ransom" for poor Lady Trelorman, who was still in England, and above all for my beloved sailor lover far away.

The interest of Arles is very great in the remains of its ancient buildings. We explored the Prætorian Palace, the Forum, the magnificent amphitheatre, and other antiquities, but I am only dwelling upon our journey in so far as it bears upon the story of my life.

It was late in the evening of the following day when I and my maid had been roving about the quaint old place for some time. We had visited the Alyschamp—the ancient cemetery of Arles—remembering its past glories and mourning over its fallen condition; I wished to visit the cloisters of St. Trophimus once more, and examine my Dante to find his allusion to the ancient burying place, which I knew was somewhere in the "Inferno." We sat down quietly in the cloisters, while I, in snatches, enjoyed the striking view of the Campanile, and hunted through my Dante for the long remembered lines. I found them at last—

"Si come ad Arli, ove 'l Rodano stagna,
Si come a Pola presso del Quarnaro,
Che Italia chiude e i suoi termini bagna,
Fanno i sepolcri tutto il loco varo :
Così facevan quivi d' ogni parte,
Salvo che 'l modo v' era piu amaro."

Inf. carte ix. 112.

As where Rhone stagnates on the plains of Arles,
Or as at Pola, near Quarnero's gulf,
That closes Italy and laves her bounds,
The place is all thick spread with sepulchres.
So was it here save what in horror here excelled.

Cary's Translation.

I was going on dreaming on the canto, and from time to time looking up at the towers, when the footman arrived with a letter. Miss Ferrers, he said, had sent it on at once to me. It was from Father Philip, and it was dated from Bordeaux. He had heard, he said, of the arrival of his boy's ship at that port. He had gone at once to meet and welcome him back to Europe ; he would make his way back to Markland immediately with Harry, and he trusted soon to see us there.

XI.

My dream of Dante was over. The towers and cloisters of Arles had lost all historic interest to me. I was thankful to M'amie for *sending* the letter. To receive it in her presence would have been more than I could bear. I was thankful that my maid was wandering up and down behind me, that no one could see me when I folded the letter up. For a moment I felt faint, and leaned up against the pillar in the middle of the cloister, and looked steadily before me. The evening light was illuminating the Campanile, and every line of light and every pencilling of shadow wrote itself into my brain. I remember every touch of it now. Over me, as I

watched it, there rushed a flood of tumultuous feeling. For the moment I could not but allow to myself what I had been so long—and I thought so unsuccessfully—trying to combat and deny. Fool that I was, I—who thought myself so strong—had really given my heart away. I loved him, and now I could not deny it, and the mere mention of his coming made me tremble like a leaf. And he—why, all his professions of affection were, as I knew, the mere impulses of boyhood, and even before he went away he had wakened up to the truth which I had told him, that it *was* only the passing dream of a boy—If he had wakened up to that before, how much more when he knew—as he must know, as he ought to know—the truth. Now he was a man. He was a rich man, a man with a future. He was no longer the interesting and mysterious “waif from the waves,” befriended by a kind adopting father, he was Earl of Trelorman, he had a future before him, and I—I had a future—the future of a compromised heart, the heart of a girl whose heart must be her own and no other’s, with a life before it which looked blank and desolate, a heart with a great love, now fully to myself acknowledged. Thank God, I thought—and I grew strong and determined again as I remembered it—known—unless partially to Lady May—to no other.

“And never shall be known,” I said to myself bitterly, but with determination. Why had I been such a fool? I could not blame that boy. A boy he was, and he had discovered in time what had been a boyish folly. I did not blame him, but men, I

thought, can throw things off more easily than women. Throw it off I could not, that I knew with more dreadful certainty, but I was not going to paralyze my self-respect and the usefulness and duty of life by a foolish dream. Now that I knew it, I myself would never allow myself to allow it even to myself. I was ashamed of having allowed it now ; a few hot tears, a few suppressed sobs came to my rescue, and then at last I was strong. Arles, meant henceforth to me nothing but the scene of a tremendous struggle, and a serious determination. Truth and duty are *the* guides of life, not feeling. "It is over now," I thought, with a sense of triumph. I had a dream, I was now wide awake ; I could meet Harry as an old acquaintance, an old friend, and no more of this folly for me !

XII.

WHEN I got back to the Hotel du Nord, I was quite calm. Dear M'amie was quietly reading in our quaint cool room. She looked so sweet and gentle and pretty—she is the prettiest old lady in the world—and received me with such beaming smiles, that, even after the storm of feeling which had been sweeping over me, I felt great peace.

"Are you pleased, my darling," she said, "at your old playfellow coming home?"

"Yes, M'amie," I said, sitting by her and stroking her thin white old hand, "it is always nice to see old friends." I tried to speak without the slightest

emotion in my voice, and I think I succeeded. My head was on her shoulder now, so that she could not see my face. She laid her book on her knee, and for a moment there was silence, and then she said,—

“My sweet child, listen to me. I spoke unkindly once to you about Harry. I do not think I am worldly, but I felt responsible, and I suppose one becomes affected by the contagious atmosphere of conventionality and worldliness around one. I have been proud of our family. I have been proud of you, my sweet child, not” (so my dear old aunt was pleased to say) “for your brilliant beauty, but for your real goodness and your love to me.”

I only kissed her hand, as if I *could* help loving *her* who had been everything to me!

“My Lettice,” she went on, quietly, “I don’t deny that I should have liked you to marry Mr. Berkeley for many reasons;” (then why was she angry when he proposed?); “but you were right, darling. Love is the first thing—it is *the* thing. I wish to say I am sorry for having spoken of Harry as only ‘the waif from the waves.’ I did *not* like that you should marry a nameless boy. Lettice, darling, I wish to say—no, don’t interrupt me!”—for I was on the point of stopping her, and she felt it—“I wish to say, my child, I withdraw all that I said; if you like to marry him, he is a dear, dear boy. I am drawn to him in a hundred ways—I can’t tell why—if you like to marry him, I shall never oppose it, I shall give you my blessing.”

Here was a situation for poor me. It was no use my *arguing* with M’amie. Indeed, if I had been so foolish as to wish to do so, I had no voice for it.

Here was a situation ! How very oddly the spring of laughter is hard by the fountain of tears ! My sweet old aunt had reconciled herself to my determination not to marry the heir-apparent of the Markland property, and had graciously but unconsciously permitted me to marry the Earl of Trelorman ! and the said earl, while remaining my childhood's companion and my old friend, had no desire to marry *me*. The thing was too ridiculous, and yet to me it was also unspeakably sad. But the comic side of it was that before me, and helped me out.

"My own sweet old M'amie," I said, "thank you so much. Harry and I have not the slightest intention of being married, and never will have ; but if we ever have, I'll come and ask your blessing ! Dear old M'amie," and I was well able to laugh in saying it, "he and I *are* old friends, and we *shall* be ; he is our dear 'Waif from the Waves,' and a very dear waif, but we noble ladies don't marry waifs and strays, so do oblige me, my own sweet M'amie, by never speaking of it again. When Harry asks me to marry him, I will let you know." and I really laughed, for I was fairly tickled by it all, without a touch of bitterness, and I could sit up and look round at M'amie with a face full of fun.

M'amie looked at me with such a look of perplexity that it made me laugh with real amusement.

"Well," she said at last, taking my face between her hands and looking with her sweet old clear eyes right into mine—I remember thinking at the time what pretty eyes she had—"Well, I think in my heart that boy is such a dear fine fellow that you might well fall in love with him " (so did *I* think, but

I kept it to myself!) ; “and as for him, if he doesn’t love you, he’s a greater fool than I take him for ; yes, my dear, for I think you quite lovely, and the dearest little Lettice that ever was born.”

My sweet M’amie ! Her strong language about Harry being “a fool” was so singularly unusual that I shook with laughter, and then I could only throw my arm round her neck, and tell her I was thoroughly in love with *her*, and I was glad *she* took such an exaggerated view of my goodness and beauty, and we should both be glad to see Harry, and that I meant to marry a duke some day with a wooden leg and three hundred thousand a year, who would be worthy of my ancestral blood, and that meantime we should both be glad to see that “waif from the waves.”

How sad it must be for people who never see the comic side of things. I have often been so glad for those dear Italians who are allowed to smile in church, and so sorry for my dear grave English who think a smile so hurts Almighty God, that to please Him they must treat all religion as if it were a funeral ceremony. My heart was really aching deep down, and I was, in myself, perplexed and distressed, but I was able to go to sleep that night quietly. The situation seemed to me so comical that I really laughed again and again to think of it, and blest my ancestors—for whom I cared little, but whom Aunt Martha loved and honoured so profoundly—that they had kindly given me a dash of Celtic blood to mix with their sterling Saxon stuff.

XIII.

THE next afternoon we left for Avignon; I was glad of this, for Arles had written its name in some sadness across my heart, and in such cases it is pleasant to have a change. Besides, it had been a dream of mine for long to visit Avignon.

It was a sweet May afternoon when we left Arles. It was hot, but the railway carriages were comfortable. There was no overcrowding, and there were no babies. It is cruel to be angry at babies. In the abstract I do not dislike babies; no real woman does like her own individual babies to be objected to. But babies, at least in any number, to whom you are not specially bound, in a railway carriage, have their drawbacks.—But this by the way.

It was the early evening when we reached Avignon. Our rooms had been ordered and were ready for us in the hotel, and they were charming. I do not know any sensation more really delightful than that of arriving on a bright evening, with a thoroughly sympathetic companion in a place you have longed to see, at a picturesque and attractive hotel. From the first moment we reached Avignon I positively loved it. Perhaps "my heart was prophet to my heart." Certainly not consciously; but the place was entrancing. Then dear sweet M'amie was so keen for enjoying everything. I never knew a more delightful travelling companion; I suppose from her real culture and her entire unselfishness. She was like a young girl in her freshness, and a high-bred old lady as she is, in her thorough knowledge and tact.

We *were* happy. My mind had been made up the night before on a painful subject, and when that is the case it is half the battle. You may have secret heartache; so I had; but "*be strong* and He shall comfort thine heart." Father Philips' favourite text was ever in my ears; and another, "*Noli æmulari—Fret not thyself.*" I had had my sorrow and I had it; which of mortals who has lived and loved has not? but I was not going to darken life for myself, and therefore for others, by allowing a secret sorrow to rule. I liked Avignon.

In the hotel we had delightful rooms, high up, old-fashioned, and looking over such a quaint street. We were dusty and a little tired, but soon fresh for a seat at *table d'hôte*. Such a pleasant *table d'hôte*! I am unsociable enough, on such occasions, to wish many *table d'hôtes* were like it. Little round tables all about a nice, fresh, French room! We had our own table to ourselves; so had other people, and yet it was a *table d'hôte*. There must still be a large slice of the exclusive Briton in me, for this I liked. There was one party of Germans there, and two or three French, and one other English. We all *observed* each other. They amused us, and I doubt not we interested them. The English party were four ladies and one gentleman. Britons abroad always begin by disliking and suspecting each other, and often end by being pleased with one another. They eyed us and we them. M'amie was so beautiful and dignified, I don't wonder they eyed her, and then she never suspected, and was always graceful and kind—I wish I was, but I am not! They were

bored with each other a little, I think. They were tired, and one was delicate, and the rest were her slaves, and she exercised her prerogative as such people do, by keeping them all "fetching and carrying," and the poor brother was the slave of all. However, we rather liked them afterwards, and discovered that they knew friends of ours; but my business is not with them now.

After dinner I got M'amie to go upstairs and lie down and rest, and then, assisted by my maid and footman, I set out to explore.

My head was full of the beauty and adventures I came across, and of that galaxy of subservient Popes, Clement V., John XXII., and Benedict XII., and I was dreaming of that strange person, Petrarch, with his sweet poetry and his impossible love for Laura. Of course I made for the Great Palace, for the palace of the Popes, and Notre Dame des Doms. It was a glorious evening, and the sun in setting had left reminiscences of glory in the molten sky, and the rising moon was flooding the Rhone and the Durance with silver light. I contented myself with a general view of the position of things, and a glimpse of the glorious view from the Ramparts. I was tired, and we soon returned to our hotel; I knew now where M'amie was to be taken, and I was content to sleep in peace and wait for the morrow.

XIV.

THE morrow was the eve of Ascension Day, and I had my programme formed in my mind. That day

and the next were for Avignon, the following day for Vaucluse, the day after for Pont du Gard, and then—for I knew our time was limited—we must turn towards home.

The day was hot and bright and beautiful. We spent the morning in the cathedral—Notre Dame des Doms. It is a most remarkable church. Besides its commanding situation on the platform of rock above the river, besides its fine approach by the great flight of steps, besides a certain sombre grandeur lent to it by the nearness of the Palace of the Popes, it has a peculiar character of its own. Nothing to approach either in size or magnificence to the great cathedrals of northern France, yet it certainly is full of impressiveness, and possessed of a striking solemnity. The attraction of the church was to me quite extraordinary. It was partly, I think, the solemn effect of the long and somewhat narrow nave, and the sense of religious seclusion in the line of chapels which ran along either side. I hardly knew when I had been so happy in any church.

We went to Low Mass in the Chapel of the Resurrection, and spent the morning until luncheon regularly exploring the church. In the afternoon we visited the Papal Palace. Built upon a vast rock between 1336 and 1370, it is, even after all its vicissitudes, a striking example of the military architecture of the fourteenth century. The brutal violence of the Revolution has left little now but a sad memory in the tower and chapel that once Simone Memmi may have painted here, and that there have been heads of the Christ and His Apostles on these walls and roofs not unworthy of Massaccio.

It was a happy, quiet day ; the soft light of morning and evening, the blazing sunlight of the middle day, the interest of the palace, the quiet gloom of the stately church, and the glorious view over the river and away to the mountains from the Rocher des Doms, all went *into* one's soul. Dear M'amie was such a sweet companion, so gentle, so willing, so keen in her interest. Few things in this world have such a whisper of the Heavenly City as a visit in sweet sunshine to a beautiful place with those we love.

The feast of the Ascension was bright and sunny and I had a quiet time, taking my maid along with me to the Low Mass in the early morning. M'amie came with me to the High Mass at half-past ten. The cathedral was crowded, but not inconveniently crammed, and one had the sense of freedom which is so delightful abroad, especially in France and Italy, and so painfully wanting at home, of being able to carry your chair and to say your prayers wherever you pleased.

We had made our way through the line of chapels which flank the northern side of the nave, to the one nearest the high altar, and there were shown every civility by two or three devout peasant women who were close to us at their prayers. The Mass was not especially splendid, but it was extremely solemn. It seemed to partake somehow of the severe temper of the great church. Just as the congregation were dispersing, the grey head of an old priest, kneeling at his prayers at the opposite side of the nave, but with his face quite concealed, attracted me by its extraordinary likeness to Father Philip.

Oddly enough too on a chair beside him was lying a sailor's cap. Where the head belonging to the cap was, did not appear ; but the accidental connection of the two made my heart beat quicker, and I called M'amie's attention to it, and she smiled and recognized how curious it was.

When I looked up again from my meditations, the grey head and the sailor's cap had both disappeared ; but they had both been there long enough to set me thinking. M'amie was seated piously reading her morning Psalms in her Prayer-book, and looking so sweet in her usual black gown and white soft shawl ; she was a real and thorough old English Catholic, but she loved these foreign churches for the sense of the supernatural they gave her, and for their quietness and solemnity and absence of fuss. I am not sure that she would not sometimes have found fault with the blue gowns and gilt coronets which sometimes adorn the statues of Our Lady, and it is possible that she might even have talked of "tawdriness" and "tinsel" (though I don't think she would, she was so gentle) like any stupid, unbelieving Briton, if it had not been for my vigorous defence of foreign Catholics for doing just what they could. And, indeed, while one detests the ugliness and forgetfulness of God and His glory in some of our churches where Protestant superstitions have reigned without rebuke, the "high church" smartness that makes everything so neat that you are afraid to move a chair or see a flower out of its place, is almost as tiresome, as it sometimes suggests that the church is a toy for your own amusement instead of a living

home for the poor of Christ. However, now I am wandering. I did wander that morning while M'amie was saying her Psalms, but it was not on such topics as these, but entirely on that sailor's cap and what it brought back to me.

After *table d'hôte* that evening I persuaded M'amie to accompany me—it was her first visit—to the top of the Rocher des Doms. It was a magnificent evening, and the view from that beautiful promenade is certainly one of the most striking in Europe. To the south the eye carries you along the course of the Durance to its junction with the Rhone ; beyond the Rhone itself rise the crests of the Alps, and on one of the outstanding rocks, in the distance are visible the towers of the Château Renard. Northward is the island of Barthelasse, and then dotted here and there are old grey towers, one of which, at least, connects itself with the history of the Knights Templars—the scandalous and cruel treatment of whom is for ever connected with Pope Clement at Avignon. Further on is the little town of Roquemaure. Eastward are the Alpes of Provence and Dauphiné, rising with their varied crests above a long stretch of fertile plains. Then nearer, but still under the mountains, are clearly seen the rugged rocks which mark the lower lines of Mont Ventoux and indicate the position of the fountain of Vaucluse. Westward the Rhone is literally dotted with islands, and just below us is the picturesque and ruined bridge of Benezet where still stands the little chapel, founded by a strange devotion some six or seven centuries ago. The view, in fact, is magnificent, and it was a delight that evening

to see the simple almost child-like pleasure of dear old M'amie as we walked slowly round the ramparts and took in the landscape. I had been a little anxious lest she should catch a chill, but our thoughtful maid had brought a shawl, and, do what I would, I could not get her to leave the place.

The sun had set, although the western sky was not forgetful of him with its crimson and saffron and gold; the moon had risen and was softening all things into a dreamy harmony in that wide calm landscape of Provence. The maid and footman were amusing themselves up and down in their own fashion in the walks of the pretty Jardin Anglais which is laid out on the platform of the rock; M'amie and I were leaning over the ramparts and gazing down into the river and across to the distant mountains. I had just said that this little journey had made me quite strong again, and that this happy Ascension Day I should never forget, when we were both startled by voices behind us and by my aunt's name pronounced in well-known tones. Turning round, not a dozen yards away from us—it was no dream, though my very brain whirled round and I could hardly believe my senses—there was Father Philip, and there was Harry!

It is hard to say what one felt or how one acted. I perfectly remember Harry's look, and in spite of all the sorrow and all the trouble, the joy that has always been mine from that face came back to me again. I knew that he shook hands with me with his usual sailor-like simplicity. I knew there was the undiminished sunshine on his face and that simple

expression of utter truth which abolished doubt, however doubt might rest on evidence. He was overjoyed to see me, of that there was no question, and my heart leaped up at seeing him without one pang of perplexity for the moment, although in another moment that perplexity naturally resumed its sway. That perplexity, however, was certainly not allowed to show itself, indeed, when I thought quietly over the situation that night I was thankful—that in spite of very real agitation—no one could have suspected how startled I was. I believe that I acted quite naturally but, indeed, how could I help it? He came up so naturally to me with such real, simple, straightforward, manly pleasure at meeting me again. There he was the same old companion of my childhood only changed from being a boy to a man. The face was bronzed, but it was the same bright face, with sincerity and truth and goodness and strength written in every line; there was the same black mop of splendid curly hair, the same red lips and white teeth and large thoughtful grey eyes and sunny, joyous smile, how could I but forget for the moment, at least, all perplexities and be downright glad to see him, he was so evidently glad to see me.

There are moments of intoxication in life which come to relieve, I suppose, the monotony of our weary existence. From what I learn of London Society now, these moments appear not to be needed by women. They are all “advanced” now, either so highly cultured, or so entirely vigorous in their egotisms that these weaknesses of their sex are gone. No, I don’t believe it of them *all*, but there are plenty of young

girls I meet in London now in later life who make me sick as I think of the deep happiness—as well of course as the deep sorrow—they miss by their loss of simplicity, and their *blasé* full-grown ways. In my time, to meet a man you loved, after years of parting, whatever had happened, whatever might happen, was unutterable joy. How could I help for the moment at least, being all sunlight? The sunshine on his face was contagious. That sweet, strong, sunny face! Truth in every line! I don't care what the evidences were against him, could I listen to them then with patience? Why, there he was before me—the bright, the beautiful, all joy to see me! One thing he could never do, he could never pretend. If he were false, then all the world of men and women was one vast lie. No! Joy, sweet manly joy, simple and respectful, but clear as the summer landscape and soft as the breath of flowers, was in that dear boy's face. And I? What would you have? I loved him with my whole heart. Whatever I might have tried to teach myself, there it was. My heart was traitor to my wise and debating thoughts. Before me stood the man I loved, and on his face was written joy, unutterable joy to see me. All else was gone, the sky, the mountains and the trees and stones. One life possessed me, held me. Ah! how with one wild wave of feeling I felt how I had missed him. The world was nothing to me without him—I know it now—life was not worth living. I wonder I did not do something mad. I could have screamed or sung with joy. No, I was awed into silence. It was all too great, too sweet, too blessed; there he stood,

my own beautiful, brave, loyal, sailor boy, I could not realize, I could only throb with happiness—he was so glad to see me!

We had all shaken hands and made the usual exclamations of astonishment and entered into the explanations which were necessary to render the situation clear, and then naturally Father Philip and M'amie fell to talking, and Harry and I, quite in the old way, lent over the rampart and looked out on the view, and then sat down on the seat under the trees and talked as if we had never parted, and talked—that astonished me, and yet I found myself doing it—as if I had never had an anxiety or perplexity, as if all my troubles were a bad dream. Explanations were soon made. He had landed at Bordeaux, whither his ship had gone to discharge cargo—he had telegraphed of course to Father Philip, and Father Philip had naturally arranged all things at Markland so as to go and meet his boy. M'amie's little note in answer to Father Philip, had given them an idea of where we were, and they had tracked us out with difficulty, fearing that perhaps they were too late, and that we had returned to England. He told me the whole story so simply and straightforwardly, that in spite of everything, I felt not the slightest embarrassment; but one thing I did feel, he had gone away a boy, he had come back a man. It was true that I was four years older than he, or nearly so, but I felt that he was older than myself. I *felt* his strength. It was that same clear, truthful, humble-minded, manly boy, with the added vigour of a real man.

"Lettice, my sweet," he said in the usual way that

he had often spoken, "isn't it just nice to see you again?" And I answered, "Isn't it, Harry?" as if I had never had a heartache in my life.

We rose to go. M'amie and Father Philip had gone on. We bent a moment over the shielding wall to look out once again on the river, and as he turned he looked at me and opened his arms. Was I wrong if they were round me? was I wrong if my head was on his shoulder, and if he kissed and kissed me and murmured, "Little Lettice, how sweet to be with you again," I only sobbed for joy and let him kiss me? Was I wrong? Ah! I knew nothing then, but only that one thing. He was my one love. I loved him, my own dear sailor-boy, I loved him, yes, and trusted him. I could only feel his strong loving arms around me, and see his earnest face looking down upon me with utter love and truth, if ever truth and love are found in this world. I did not think, I did not argue, I only loved and trusted, I was only a woman after all, and was I wrong?

I did not sleep much that night, chiefly I think from overwhelming pleasure; for is there any pleasure in this world to compare with the joy of seeing once again—and after a long and distressing separation—the face you love best in the world, and being near the one person compared with whom all else is a dream, and who is everything, literally everything to you?

XV.

ACCORDING to the programme I had sketched for M'amie, we set out early the following morning for

Vaucluse. We all went together, and as for me, I was so heartily glad to see Harry again, and he so evidently and heartily glad to see me, that I dismissed all anxious questions for the moment, and determined—which I think was prudent, although perhaps not highly moral—to enjoy the present whatever the future might bring.

The drive from Avignon to Vaucluse is extremely pretty, we passed Le Thor and then L'isle, and were delighted with the laughing brightness of Provence. As for Harry he was like a child, he had been so long at sea that every sight on land was like a new toy to a child.

Vaucluse is extraordinarily beautiful.

Petrarch is a poet who has never affected me very deeply. The whole story of his love for Laura is so entirely unsatisfactory. I told it as well as I could to Harry that day, and I am sorry the result was that he considered the poet a "great ass;" but he, as well as I and all of us, were fairly convinced that Petrarch understood the beauties of nature, and that Vaucluse was one of the sweetest spots upon earth. We had luncheon in the garden of the little inn, in the sweetest of arbours. Then M'amie and Father Philip wandered off to sit in Petrarch's garden, while Harry and I went up to the fountain, as the fatigue of the walk was beyond their powers.

We had a guide with us who was certainly useful at first and then tiresome at last. Harry got rid of him eventually in a summary manner. He was not very glib with his French, and hardly knew what to call him, but in English he called him to me—I

regret to acknowledge—"a confounded ass." The guide went off and we wandered alone, and enjoyed ourselves immensely.

After examining the fountain, which was beginning to decline, in the extraordinary manner in which it does as the spring goes on, leaving its rocks covered with moss and with what one might almost call seaweed, exposed to sight—we sat down at last to rest on the hill-side, where we had a view of the fountain and were sheltered by the gathering shadows from the mountain and by a solitary tree. I had asked him to tell me all about his voyages, and he had ; and we had talked in a quite easy and pleasant fashion, just like the old days, when at last we reached a full stop. It was then that he turned round to me, fixing upon me his honest eyes, and said,—

"Lettice, my darling, will you answer the question I asked you before I went away ?"

"What question, Harry ?" I said, but I felt that my voice was trembling and my heart was flying.

"Oh, Lettice," he said, "you are far too true to trifle, you cannot misunderstand me ; you said I was a boy when I asked the question ; perhaps I was, but I am no boy now, and I ask it again : will you be my wife ?"

He seemed to know by instinct that I could not answer him, for he went on :

"I know I am only 'the waif from the waves,' I know that no one knows where I came from ; I know you belong to the old race of the Ferrers ! I know all that. But I know that I love you with all my heart and that I have always loved you ; and Father

Philip, who has taught both you and me, has taught us that love is the highest thing in this world. Don't you love me, Lettice?" he said, quietly, looking at me straight; if you say you don't, there's the end of it, and I will never speak of it again,"—and the look of pain that went over that beautiful face—for it was beautiful in its manliness and its goodness, I have never forgotten, I shall never forget—"but if you do love me, will you be my wife?"

I really was now in extreme distress, but I suppose that in such moments one's whole being falls back unconsciously upon the teaching and habit of years. The one thing that had been most deeply impressed upon me, was at once to be kind *and* to be true; but if I had never been trained by such teachers as Father Philip and M'amie, what woman could have been other than true with such as he? For a moment I felt the distress, but that was soon gone; he was far too simple, too manly, too gentle to trifle with.

"Harry," I said, "there are three things I have to say to you in answer. First of all, I love you with my whole heart, you are everything in the world to me." Of course I suppose I flushed when I said this, but he was so simple and calm that I did not feel the difficulty in saying it that some girls might feel under such circumstances. He only grasped my hand in his brown, beautiful, manly hand—for it is a beautiful hand—and I saw that his face lit up with a quiet joy; but he did not interrupt me but waited for my second point.

"Harry," I went on, "I have told you the truth, but remember that I warned you in the past that the

old love you expressed for me was probably from the impulse of a boy. Well, after you went away, you wrote me that farewell letter telling me that I was right. Why have you changed your mind? Can I be sure that your present mood is lasting, rather than that *that* letter expresses your real mind?"

As I spoke, he looked at me at first with an expression of quiet astonishment and then of blank dismay, and then that sunny face seemed to be covered with most awful clouds. I have never seen such splendid anger; it was the *virtue* of anger which is so rare, if ever that virtue is to be found, and before he uttered a word I knew that it was all right. He rose to his feet, however, quietly, and stood before me. I see him now with his black curly hair tossed in the wind, and his bright eyes and his bronzed face. I hardly cared what he said, I felt so proud of him. "Waif from the waves," indeed! He looked every inch the real gentleman that he was. And then he said very gently but with evidently restrained emotion, which made me feel what a baby I was beside him, and how real was his strength,—

"Lettice, my darling, I never wrote to you in my life; you know that I was not allowed to write to you at Winchester; you know that, although we were more like brother and sister, Father Philip would not allow it, because he thought M'amie would not approve; I have *never* written to you. If any one has written that—forgive me, dear—that person is a lying devil, and"—I almost trembled as I saw his face, it was covered with a thunder-

cloud—"if I had them in my hands, I would crush them to pieces ; if they were under my feet, I would grind them to powder."

It is strange how the human mind acts in serious moments. His words were to me like a fresh breath of air to a stifling patient, like the brightness of morning to a weary soul tossing in sickness in the dark, but it is true that I did not think about myself at that moment ; it came back to me afterwards as a proof that I really *loved* him—for a woman scarcely ever quite forgets herself except for a man she *loves*—what I did think was how worthy he was of his great Norman ancestry, what a real noble gentleman in the uniform of an apprentice in the merchant service, and how *he* did not know it, but *I* knew it, and if I had not known it I must have suspected it, or rather, perhaps, I should have realized how sweet a thing it is that there is a true nobility in goodness which some people doubt.

I suppose there was a pause while these thoughts flew through my mind, for Harry, still standing before me and looking at me, suddenly said,—

"Lettice, do you doubt me?"

"Doubt you?" I said. "I would sooner doubt my own existence," and I know I spoke quite calmly, for it had been a steady conviction ; "but, Harry, I thought you might have had good reasons for writing the letter. I am *so* glad to know now, you never did."

No words can ever tell how glad I was ; a new dawn had broken for me, there was no shadow over my old love. The truest, bravest, noblest man I had

ever known loved me, and I loved him. Whatever sorrow might be in store for me, *that* sunlight of eternity had broken on my life.

But there was one point more that I had to consider, and with so true a man, who now indeed I really worshipped, I was determined to be true.

He thought that a mere "Waif from the Waves" was asking a girl of high birth to be his wife. *I* knew that under the guise of that handsome apprentice going up by-and-by, perhaps, for examination for his mate's certificate, before me stood the Earl of Trelor-man, and that if I married him, I should marry one to whom, indeed, I was not inferior in blood or real distinction of family, but that I, a comparatively poor girl, would be marrying great wealth and a stately title. I wished with all my heart he were only the "Waif from the Waves," I wished he were only Harry St. John, but I knew the facts and he did not.

I felt with a real joy in my heart, to such as he it would make no difference, but nothing in the world would induce me to bind him to such a position without knowing precisely what he did.

"Harry," I said, looking straight up at him, "I have told you I love you with my whole heart; of course I *know* now you never wrote that letter, but there are things that *I* know which *you* do not; until you know them and tell me that, notwithstanding, you are of the same mind, I cannot promise to be your wife. I have trusted you, you must trust me."

As he looked at me, a quiet, sunny smile came over his face, and then he stooped down, and raised me up in his arms and kissed me gently on my

lips, and then held me off a little distance from him with his own sweet smile.

"My Lettice," he said, "my own little darling, you are mine, then, and I am yours. No future information can ever alter two things," and he laughed with such sunny sweetness as he said it, "you love me, my little darling, and I love you."

That evening at Vaucluse, that quiet drive back to the old papal city, the moonlight on the ramparts again where he and I together gazed on that entrancing landscape—all, as I think of them, represent to me the glorious setting of the truest fact and sweetest picture in this beautiful world—the security of a great and changeless love.

Then there came three or four such sunny days in Avignon. Everything was sunlight, everything was beautiful to me; but, in fact, there *was* much of beauty and floods of sunlight. It is said that here there is much suffering from the violence of the *mistral*, and that this terrible wind at times makes a desolation of this part of Provence. It is difficult for me to believe it. The name of it represents to me unclouded sunshine and unchequered joy. We were all happy, and in this sad life it is not often given to have moments of unclouded happiness. I was happy—how could I help it?—because the cloud was dispersed and the darkness was over, and my sunshine was upon me with unbroken lustre. Father Philip was happy because he had with him his beloved boy who, in his own particular affections—dear old Father—was all the world to him. Harry was happy, with the quiet simple sailor joy, first, I do believe, because

he was with Father Philip—for his devotion to him was absolute—and then because I was there. Dear old M'amie was happy because—in spite of all her efforts at prudence—every one else was happy, and nothing in life has ever given that sweet soul such joy as that.

I hardly knew what we did. We explored many churches, and were present at many services. It was sweet to me to notice the quiet earnestness of my sailor lover in all things relating to religion. Winchester, the rough life of the sea, nothing had changed that quiet earnestness and that manly grip of the Catholic Faith which I had noticed in him from a boy. There is but one religion of common sense—the common sense of both worlds—and that is the Catholic Faith. And in spite of all the real attraction of the churches of the Latin Communion, nowhere does it show itself so entirely in its spiritual beauty and stalwart strength as in those who have learnt it in the English Church. Wherever, indeed, there is the true Catholic Spirit, *there* is the absence of that hollowness which makes a ruin of spiritual life; *there* there is the beauty of reality! But I am quoting Father Philip now! So I return.

We had real pleasure in listening to Father Philip's historical teachings as we examined the Cathedral and the Papal Palace. He had his *Goldaste* and his *Defensor Pacis* at his finger ends, and gave us a vivid picture of the critical times of the Papacy as it passed through "the Babylonish Captivity." He told us all about Clement, and John XXII., and the miserable

controversies, and wretched cruelties relating to the suppression of the Templars, and he was equally at home in later episodes, and in the story of the Maréchal Brune. We were all really interested, but I do not think he would have been so animated, or I so happy, if Harry had not been one of the audience.

Another day, besides our Petrarch day at Vacluse, stands out distinctly in my memory. That was the day we spent at Pont du Garde. The solitary valley, the noble aqueduct, the sunshine and cloud of that afternoon ; the sweet quiet home in the little arbour by the inn, the absurd drive to the railway station, who can forget them ? To me it was all one sweet dream—the views, the sunshine, the grand old monuments, they were all very well—*one* thing held me, entranced me, made me happy ; *he* was there !

Father Philip felt precisely the same ; that I could see. As for him being happy without Harry, or Harry without him, the thing was impossible. That night in our hotel Harry sang to me the verses Father Philip had written to him. I thought them beautiful, and he said that he had never sung them to anyone till he sang them to me. I thought them beautiful, and what is more, I thought them true.

They ran as follows :—

“ Since first the sunlight on your face,
Told me we ne’er could part ;
I loved you from my soul, my son,
And heart was knit to heart.
For Truth was in your glance, my child,
By Truth the soul is won,
We loved, as son a father loves,
As father loves a son.

We've journeyed on the pathless sea,
And watched the starlit sky,
And climbed at eventide the hills
Together—You and I.
Sometimes the olives, shivering, bent
To winds, too dank and cold,
Or mountains frowned in robes of gloom,
Or dreamed in robes of gold.
Yet still, however chill the blast,
Or changeful mountains' hue,
To us all summer—since we were
Together—I and you.

They were dated Porto Fino, and had been written there when he and Harry were together in Italy. Then we had another wander on the Rocher des Doms. It is never to be forgotten that happy time at Avignon !

XVI.

WE were sorry to leave Avignon ; as for me I was broken-hearted. I began to think I loved Avignon as much as I loved Harry. This idea, however, was corrected by an effort of imagination, by which I realized what Avignon would have been without him. What a marvellous thing is real love ! It is not true that places are all the same, but it *is* true that beautiful places are more beautiful, and the most desolate places are changed into smiling gardens, if you have the presence of those you love. I felt this

in myself ; I felt it almost more in Father Philip. Harry to me now was a man, and there was no denying it ; he was stronger than I, and his quiet, sunny determination mastered me with that sense of joy that a woman feels when she can trust utterly and rest entirely on a strong man.

But with Father Philip Harry I saw was still a child ; his obedience, his devotion, his tender caressing ways were just the same and even more than in the old past. His love for Father Philip was one of the sweetest things I have ever seen, "passing," as the Bible would say, "the love of woman." I do not think that I would have dared to enter the lists against Father Philip. Harry loved him with a combination of all sorts of the highest impulses and ideas that can guide the human heart. As for Father Philip, that boy I knew had never been out of his mind from the moment that he rescued him from the waves. He could not bear him out of his sight, and yet he could bear anything if it were really for his good. I have never seen anything in life more perfect or unselfish than the love of that father and son.

We had a pleasant journey to Paris, for I think we all were easy in our minds. Dear M'amie never minded anything if I looked happy, and I am sure I did look happy, for I certainly felt it. Harry I know was happy. Sailors are always happy on coming to land, but besides that in his own simple way he was so happy at having his old father and me. We were all turned out at Dijon to have a *table d'hôte*, and we realized more than ever how well those things are organized on the continent, and what a blot on civili-

zation are some of our hugger-mugger refreshment rooms on the English railways. When we reached Paris we were grimy but good-tempered, for if English refreshment rooms are scandalous as far as provisions go, French coal-dust has a special power for destroying the cleanliness of travel.

I had had a letter at Avignon from Lady Trelor-man telling me how desperately ill she felt, which was driving me on, partly from real love and pity for her, and partly for Harry's sake. Dear M'amie was always prepared to do whatever I had made up my mind for, and although I was anxious not to overtire her, I did feel that this was an occasion when we must push on. We were only about three hours in Paris, during which time we made most ineffectual efforts to abolish the physical results of our long, hot journey. The early hours of the following morning found us in London, and after a hurried breakfast we succeeded in catching the Cornish express.

It was late on the sweetest of May evenings when we reached Markland. M'amie insisted on Father Philip and Harry dining at the Priory, and with my maid in attendance I accompanied them back to the Rectory, and with Father Philip's permission and without calling upon my maid to know that I had left the house, Harry and I walked up to the churchyard, and sat on the cliff and felt as if Vaucluse and Avignon and our long separation were all a dream, and that the one reality which never left us—sung long ago in the sea song of those cliffs, repeated again that night in the solemn roll of the Atlantic music—was the story of our unchanging love.

XVII.

I HAD not told Harry everything, of course, for I could not, but I *had* told him of my affection for Lady Trelorman, of her illness and her sorrows and, what I believed to be the fact, her approaching end. I asked him to walk up with me on the following morning to the Hall, and told him that I should probably stay there until midday or after, that he might fetch me if he liked about three o'clock, and that if she were very ill, as I almost feared, I might return again at night.

How sweet it was, the walk that morning! Dear Father Philip came with us part of the way, and I in my wicked, womanly imaginations thought that perhaps he was inclined to be jealous; but I soon learned that no love for me, true and deep as it was, could ever shake Harry's devotion to his old father, and that between that father and son there was an especial affection which nothing else I have ever seen has quite matched in this world.

I tried to persuade Harry to come in when we reached the Hall; that was useless. His pretty and yet manly shyness about thrusting himself forward touched me much. There is no shyness so really beautiful and so free from mere self-consciousness as that of a high-minded, manly boy. In this instance I confess I rather enjoyed it. I liked to find a touch of boyhood about one I felt so strong a man, and it was so curiously unlike those *blasé* noodles, those affected, unreal, moving dolls who had done me the

honour to dance with me occasionally in London and who set themselves up as the examples of the young England of the moment. For them I had always had a sincere contempt, and it was possible to snub them with entire satisfaction. She would have been a remarkable woman who would have been tempted or would have attempted to snub Harry, as he would have been a daring man—and I would have felt pity for him—who would have put on airs towards him. The fact is that Reality is high breeding, *and* it is Strength.

However, Harry would not come in when we reached the Hall. He was shy. There was something to me at once pathetic and amusing in the knowledge that Lord Trelorman was shy about entering his own house! The thing had its serious side, and yet, as I have said, if we allow ourselves to think of the reality of things, seriousness like a valuable coin has the obverse of its chief figure.

When I was in the great hall, and had bid Harry good-bye, I could not help smiling to myself to think of the way that *I* was treated by her ladyship's footmen; to think of his certainly restrained but evidently contemptuous astonishment at the fact that I was accompanied only by Father Philip's sailor boy, side by side with the knowledge which I possessed that it was the real lord of all these broad acres and this stately home who had accompanied me with such shy simplicity to his own Hall door.

Lady Trelorman, so the footman said, was very poorly that day, and not able to be out of her room. In a few minutes I was shown upstairs.

I found her seated in her pretty bedroom, close by the window that looked out on the sea ; she was dressed in her dressing gown and propped up on pillows, but the change that had passed over her since last I had seen her was terrible—it was the change from life to death. And yet she was the same beautiful woman who had always, I do not know why, more or less attracted me ; and the gentleness which I had noticed in her face when last I had seen her had become more definite and characteristic, illuminated as it was by a light coming from another world.

When I entered the room she had stretched out her arms towards me with a very loving smile. In another moment I had taken off my hat and my jacket and was kneeling beside her as she lay back in her great armchair. What a beautiful woman she was ! I know I had always felt the attraction of that astonishing beauty, even when there was something in it which made me perplexed and afraid, but now I could only look up to her with love and longing, for there was nothing in the face but simple sweetness and humble and pathetic sorrow.

“My little darling,” she said in that sort of unimpassioned real voice which belongs to those who are nearing and consciously nearing the great change, “I am so thankful to see you. My sufferings are severe, but not so severe as I deserve ; still, if paroxysms come on, I may not be able to speak of everything ; the time is short, and I must do all quickly.”

She had her hand upon my head and was looking

straight down into my face, just as *I* had done in that terrible night which neither of us had forgotten. But now she looked so calm, so beautiful, so suffering, I felt my eyes were filling with tears and could not speak. She went on quite calmly,—

“Tell me first, darling, that you still love me. If I am saved, your love is my salvation.”

I was able to look up at her honestly—because it was quite true—and say, “Dear Lady Trelorman, I love you dearly.”

The pressure of her hand tightened a little upon my head; a smile, half pain, half pleasure, passed over her pale face and then she said, “If you love me, you will help me; there are one or two things to do and then I am at peace.” She paused for a moment and asked me to ring the bell and call her maid. She came and gave her some medicine which stood upon her dressing-table close by. I suppose it was some anæsthetic, for she seemed better. I knelt down again beside her and then she said,—

“Listen, Lettice; don’t interrupt me. Forgive me, and still love me, if you can. I loved Lord Trelorman, my husband, long ago. They would not permit him to marry me because I was not born in the purple. I married a man I did not care for. He married a woman he did not love. I hated her, poor soul—God forgive me!—and made the closing months of her life unhappy, not that she ever really cared for him. I hated their son, because he was their son. I fed the fire of anger between him and his father after his father had married me. The boy went off to sea; then, as perhaps you know, he had also married

that pretty, golden-headed girl whose death I had to answer for"—and she shuddered as she spoke. "You have seen her, Lettice," she went on, looking straight down into my eyes, "and you know how I have suffered. I never meant to kill her, poor child; but I encouraged him to drive her out on that wild night into the snow, and you know she died. God knows"—and, for the first time, some emotion came into her voice—"I would have given my life to bring back her life, poor child! But temptation had been yielded to. Her son had been saved, 'The Waif from the Waves.' I meant no ill that night when I visited the harbour after the shipwreck of the *Ben Venue*; I went to do some good. Why is the devil allowed to turn our best intentions into evil? I suddenly discovered in Felix's cottage that the little child whom Father Philip had saved from the wreck was poor Markland's boy. Round his neck was a chain holding his father's and mother's portrait, and at the back of that portrait a statement of the fact. Here it is," she said, putting her left hand on the little table beside her and grasping a large locket and a chain. "I hope to live, please God, to give it to Markland." She paused and smiled, then repeated, "Markland! he is Trelorman now. Thank God, it is all right! I must stop now. I will tell him and you *all* by-and-by."

She paused and gasped, and asked me to give her another spoonful of the mixture her maid had left, and then she said, looking straight, but with such an anxious passion in her look, direct into my eyes, "Lettice, I have done very wrong, but I will tell him and you all!"

Who knows by what a mixture of currents of thought and feeling a human soul is swayed? Who can tell why souls are knit to souls? I had loved this strange woman from the first moment that I had really known her, through some mysterious "illative sense" that made me feel a goodness in her beneath the wrong. Anyhow, there it was, whatever wrong she had done, I could throw my arms about her neck and feel not anger, but, oh! such sorrow, for her temptations, and, oh! such pity for her fall; and I could only say, as I laid my head upon her breast, "Dear, darling Lady Trelorman, I do forgive you, I do love you so much, so very much." She was lying back in her chair gasping after the effort she had made. I looked up for a moment: her face was so beautiful, so tender, you could not help but love her. She lay quiet for a minute, then she raised herself in a stately way, and lifted up my face and kissed my lips slowly and thankfully, and then she said, "My little darling, you have saved me; if you can forgive and love me, then God can." I knelt with my arms about her neck and my head upon her shoulder, and sobbed as if I had done the wrong. To me it seemed so sad. I, who had life before me, with such great love to help me, face to face with a ruined life. I could not think of any wrong she might have done. I hardly knew what she meant. I could only think, "Can I, with all the wealth of sunlight God has given me, give this poor soul one ray of sunlight before she goes?" We lay there in each other's arms for a few minutes silently, and then she said, "Lettice, I have made some things clear to you, not

all, not yet ; for Markland—Trelorman, I mean—all is settled. The case is proved, my will is witnessed, so that there shall be no mistake if they dispute his title ; but I have put all matters in train, so that the Lords will not dispute his title, the thing is clear. As to my own son—as to Berkeley—I have left him not badly off, with money that I had a right to arrange for. The jewels, which were all left to me, I have left to you, my darling. Of course”—and she faintly smiled as she said it—“you will be Lady Trelorman. Lettice, listen ; don’t forget, when you are here, this broken-hearted, wicked woman, who has been before you, whom you by your love have saved, I hope—pray for my soul.” She was very tired, and rested for a moment, and then she added, “Two things I want—I want to make my first and last confession to Father Philip. You will send him to me, and quickly, dear, for time is short. You know the nonsense I have joined in talking with disloyal or ignorant children of the English Church about Father Philip’s teaching on confession ? I am thankful for that teaching now.” And then she added, in a low voice, and as if she were by herself and no one near, “He hath left power and authority to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins.”

There was silence for a moment. “One thing more, my darling,” she added. “I want to see Markland—Trelorman, I mean—Harry, whatever you call him—I want to see him ; you will come with him. Send Father Philip, my sweet, and then come, you and he, and don’t be long ; it is getting near the end.”

She lay back on her pillows, and, though she looked exhausted, there was a quietude and peace upon her face as I leant over her and kissed her. She only whispered, "My own little darling, you have saved me; go now."

XVIII.

DANTE says that haste and hurry destroy all dignity, and Dante is mostly right; but I would have sacrificed dignity or anything that day if only to be quick. How odd it is the way in which details imprint themselves upon your mind with sharper power when you have to deal with most serious things! I literally rushed across the park and up the headland, and past the church and down the path that skirted the cliff, and made for Father Philip's little vicarage, and yet I saw the peacock sitting on the terrace by the hall, and wondered at the beauty of his neck; I noticed how the Gloire de Dijon rose had come out in the fullest bloom, and how the little Banksia was tumbling and flowing all round the griffins which held the shields upon the outer gate; I wondered why a long stretch of the distant sea, when once I had topped the cliff, was deepest green or sombre brown, and why the nearer rollers of the ocean came in, in stately measure, with such translucent blue; I wondered why the old church-keeper did not mend a ragged flounce upon her gown, and why Father Philip himself had left a bed below his study window free from flowers. Why is it that the deepest emotions often make us so preternaturally

alive to detail? I am always asking that question, and find no complete answer. Is it that the immortal soul, feeling the greatness of the real things, will never be content without scanning the most trifling forms and figures of the frame in which the picture must be set? I sent Father Philip to the Hall—he was always prompt whenever a life-boat or a soul was concerned—then I walked home. Dear M'amie! I knew she would expect me, and I equally knew that she would not be disturbed if I were late. I told her I was glad we had come back; I believed that Lady Trelorman was dying, and I was glad to have seen her, and she was glad to have seen me.

We had our tea, as usual, on our terrace, looking at that pretty view where the foreground was carpeted with sweet flowers, and, in the far distance, the deep blue sea. I need not say I was not surprised that Harry appeared before our tea was over. But what a joy to see him come across the lawn! Just like old days, and yet so different! That dear bright boy, and yet so utterly a man, and the sunlight on his face and his pretty curly hair, and his blue clothes which reminded me of the sea, and the lazy lounge of the sailor walk, and the sense that all of it was gathered up in love for me,—it was so sweet. Girls are not allowed to say much, and do not allow themselves, if they are good girls, to say much, even to themselves; but girls can feel, and when a man does love them who is worthy, and whom they love, they can be glad, and I *was* glad.

Harry walked with me up the path towards the church. We went into the church together, to say

our prayers. There was none of that vulgar silliness about him which I have found in some young men, and which leads them to the affectation and pretence of assuming that religion is made for weaklings or for women, and not for men.

Harry was not like that. Sailors have powers about them on the wide, sad sea which help them to withstand the affectations and frivolities that empty young English life of its manliness and truth. We two together said our prayers.

It was still early in the evening ; the tide was out, but rolling up ; we crossed the sands, ascended the cliff, went over the bridge and sat together under the rocks upon the " Island," where we had sat and talked so long before. There was the same great stretch of sea ; there, point after point, and headland after headland, stretched out before us the long and varied line of savage coast. It was the very spot where Harry first had told me that he loved me ; where I had told him—thinking I was speaking truly—that he was only a boy, and I could not allow his love ; when he had spoken so humbly about his social place, only the " Waif from the Waves," as he said : there we sat down, and there, because he had asked me to do it, I told him the real story—as far as I knew it—with no witness by, but only the circling birds and the whispering winds and our own beloved solemn sea.

He listened to it quite unmoved, but deeply interested, and put down his face between his knees, and then looked up with such a sunny smile.

" By Jove," he said, " it *is* jolly ! I always thought

I was a swell because you were such a swell, and cared about me, but it is nice to have all this come out—just as if it were in a book—to make you happy. Was that what stopped you, little sweet?" he said. "What funny things women are. You thought perhaps I might not like to marry you, because I turned out to be an earl! My darling, I wish I were only a common sailor to make you happy in a quiet cottage, but if I must be an earl, then you must be a countess, and I will do my best to make you happy wherever we are."

It was very sweet to hear him speak like that, and sweeter still, when he put his arm around me and laid my head upon his breast, and said, with those true, strong eyes looking straight down at me, "Life is no life without you, darling, this earldom is a bother, and I don't know how I shall bear it; but you will help me, won't you, not to make a fool of myself among all these flunkeys, the high-bred flunkeys, and the hired?"

XIX.

WE sat there for a long, long time, talking over the old days, and remembering, but now with such a peaceful happiness, all our troubles. If, as the great poet says—

A sorrow's crown of sorrow
Is remembering happier things,

so I am quite sure that a crown of real joy in this

strange changeful life, is to remember sorrows that are gone, and through which we have been led to conduct ourselves not all unworthily. There I sat, under that well-known rock, and he lay on the grass beside me with his head on my knee, while my fingers played with his mass of curls, and sometimes we talked and sometimes we were silent, and the sea birds wheeled about us, and the quiet summer evening crept on, and the lights kept changing on the heaving sea, and the sun sank down, and we watched him sink first in his burnished gold, and then in his softened crimson, and then sending across the sea to our very feet below the cliffs an unfolded carpeting of amber, and gold, and fire, and then everything was softened off—the long line of the headlands, and the heaving waves of liquid light—softened off in the perfect harmony of the summer gloaming of that dying day; then the young moon rose with a silver crescent, and there we sat on, sometimes talking, sometimes silent, and now and again he looked up at me, and I bent over him and kissed his lips. Ah! we hardly knew how the time went; we hardly saw how the moon rose; for our life seemed all gathered up, and concentrated into one joyous dream of perfect peace. I hardly thought of the revelation of Harry's real social dignity, I was hardly able to grasp the meaning of this strange *denouement*. Down deep in my mind I was almost sorry for it, for I felt a sort of pride in being ready to marry my sailor boy; I, with my long line of famous ancestors, and all my family pride of blood—when no one knew where he came

from. But then again I was glad that all should know that what I had ever felt was true, that he must be the son of noble sires. It never occurred to me to be proud of taking such a social position, for we were a proud race at the Priory, and somehow it had never entered my mind that any rank or title could add to the dignity of my father's daughter. But I did feel proud for Harry. I hope it was not wrong, but I could not help rejoicing that that "Waif from the Waves," that dear, beautiful brave boy who had been a companion of my early years, and then my lover, and for whom I had suffered somewhat, but to whom I have never been for an instant untrue, would now have to be acknowledged by the best of them as being more than their equal. I had always been proud of him, but now I couldn't help feeling a real joy, that they would all have to say that I had been right. I was glad—I can't but confess it—that Harry had turned out to be "a great swell," as he called it. This kind of thought kept moving through my brain, but beyond all this, on that sweet summer night, the real thing was—we were happy!

We were startled at last from our lazy dreaming, by hearing some one call his name.

"It is Father Philip," Harry said to me. "We must go, but, Lettice, my own little sweet, my own little sweetheart, just give me a good long kiss and tell me once again you love me, not earls or dukes, or any tiresome things of that sort, but just your own old sailor boy."

Of course I leant over him and kissed him, and told him for the hundredth time that I loved him,

and had always loved him, and then we rose to go. I think we were both a little embarrassed—although he was always so perfectly simple that nothing seemed really to embarrass him—when turning round we saw dear old Father Philip standing looking at us. I remember his appearance now. His white hair and his almost white face took a soft glow from the beautiful western light that had crept across the sea; he stood there on the rock above us, looking down upon us with a sad and loving expression in his dear old face; his cassock moved a little in the wind, and his priest's hat was under his arm, so that the white hair was slightly moved by the evening breeze; he looked like a great, strong, quiet guardian angel smiling down upon us with a sense that much of his work was done.

“My darling children,” he said, “this is a happy time, although there is sadness with it; I have come from her dying bed, poor soul, and she is at peace, you must not see her to-night, but you must to-morrow; there will be time—the call has not come yet—but it is coming—it is coming;” and these last words he spoke as if to himself, and such a look of sweetness and longing came over that face, that we both loved so much, as he gazed out far over the solemn sea, that we both looked up at him in silence, and dared not speak a word, and then he looked down on us again with a sweet and happy smile.

“My darling children,” he said, “I know it *all* now; I have long suspected it, but now it is all clear, and you, my beloved boy, shall have your rights, and I am sure will do your duty, and you, my little

Lettice, always so loyal to him, will have your lover and your husband, and no one shall gainsay you any more." We both stood gazing up at him as he spoke—that dear old Father Philip who had loved us so, and guided us always—and then he said,—

"Kiss her, Harry, my boy, and tell her that you know the trouble is all over," and Harry took me in his arms and kissed me, and we both felt it was a serious, a sacred thing, and quite naturally we fell upon our knees on the soft grass, and standing above us the dear old Father blessed us—we three alone, with only the sea birds, and the night winds, and the blessed angels, and the watching stars, and the solemn thunderous roll of the great Atlantic which seemed to sink down into a quiet murmur, to be glad at the happiness of its one brave child, and to rejoice in our joy.

The tide was out when we crossed the curve of sand by Torth, and there was no need for Harry to carry me, as once he had done, but we three walked quietly home together, not saying much, but feeling oh, so happy. They both walked with me to the Priory gate, and as they both kissed me and said good-night, Father Philip said to me, "My little Lettice, have I not always told you 'The Lord is mindful of His own,' and now I may say my *Nunc Dimittis* as you two darling children at last are happy." It had been a very sweet and solemn evening.

XX.

I FOUND M'amie waiting for me in the library as usual. I think as usual also she had been praying in her oratory, and she was sitting in her armchair, and she had Bishop Andrews' Devotions lying open on her knee. Sweet M'amie ! she was such a thorough Catholic, with all the special restraint and tenderness and dignity which marks a real old English gentlewoman brought up upon the Prayer-book. Everything that belongs truly to the Catholic Church is beautiful. The gift of beauty is a gift of God, but there are special marks belonging to different parts of the Church, and there is a real *aroma* of French piety or Italian piety which is very lovely, but in English piety also when it is Catholic there is a beautiful *aroma* all its own. I have never noticed that so thoroughly in any whom I have known as in M'amie and Father Philip, and I think nearest to them in this are Sir William and Lady May at Stafferton.

"You have had a very happy evening, darling Lettice, I hope?" she said. "Father Philip kindly said that he would see to you and Harry."

"A very very happy evening, dear sweet M'amie," I answered, "and Father Philip and Harry came with me to the door, but they would not come in ; Father Philip knew it was too late for you."

"It is never too late, my child," she answered, "to see the Father, and Harry is always welcome," and as she said it she gave a little sigh.

It was most dear of her, and sweet of her, and I

knew she loved Harry, and she had conquered all her fear and prejudice from love to me and respect to Father Philip, but dear sweet old lady it still was, and I could feel it, a tremendous trial. I knew she felt that there was something not quite according to all she had been used to think of as right and fit, that the heiress of the Ferrers should have as her accepted lover a mere sailor lad, of whose origin no one knew anything, and who was a mere "waif from the waves;" dear old M'amie, she belonged to the *ancien régime*, but divine grace had a power with her, quite unusual among many of the aristocracy, quite impossible with the *snobbish* aristocracy, to induce her almost to be persuaded that it was not necessary to salvation to have been created on a specially reserved "day," or to have had a private boat at the time of the flood!

As I lay down on the carpet, and put my head on her knee that night I was really *chuckling* at the revelation I was now allowed to make.

There are moments in life when you have an opportunity of triumph, and no one can blame me if I wished to *taste* it all. My readers will not forget that I had loved and stood by that curly-headed boy when every one sneered at the notion of his being any one at all; and—though I have not before told my readers this—the only "difference" my beloved aunt had ever had with Father Philip and with me was about him; and if she had—so sweetly as she did—given in at last, it was only because she loved me so, and could not help whatever happened (and who could help it?), could not

help but love Harry. Still there it was, and it was sad to her. She had been entrusted with the sole-surviving heiress of all the Ferrers, and the future of the said heiress she was bound to guard. For myself I somehow fancied the sun might rise and set, the rain might fall, the crops might grow, and birds might sing in spring, and autumn leaves might sweep before the gale, and lads and lassies might be glad in summer time, and men might pay their taxes, and politicians might enjoy the propagation of their usual fables, and things in fact might still go on, not quite unlike the usual way in which they had gone on before if all the Ferrers had been swept into the broad Atlantic ! but this was heresy at the Priory, and I loved M'amie too deeply to hint at cruel revolutionary thoughts like these ! For M'amie's doctrine, good and holy as she really was, was quite the opposite. I think she felt in some way that she hardly stated to herself, that if the Ferrers were eclipsed, the lost churches in the sands on the Cornish coast would be as nothing in their desolation and utter hiddenness to the ruin of those solemn headlands, and all the simple people who lived along them, if we were gone !

Say what you like, and laugh as you please, I have never known any people more dignified and beautiful than those strange old characters, like M'amie, of the *ancien régime*. When they loved God, they lived with dignity and tenderness, they were never ill-bred in the worst catastrophe, and they could die with decorum.

And here she was, this dear old lady, and from

sheer love to me and respect for Father Philip, she found herself consenting to the marriage of the heiress of all the Ferrers with an unknown sailor boy—a “waif from the waves.” Could I wonder that she sighed a little! Could I help *chuckling* as I thought—even from her point of view of my coming triumph. And then it was so sweet to me to feel that she had consented from sheer goodness, when she did *not* know.

I lay down on the thick soft rug at her feet, and put my head upon her knee and looked out across our descending terraces towards the moonlit sea. I was so unutterably happy I could afford to be mischievous and leisurely in my revelations.

“M’amie, darling,” I said, “I have had such a happy evening, and you have been so sweet and kind in allowing us to love each other without opposing us; you are not unhappy, M’amie, that I love Harry so?”

“My sweet child,” she said, stroking my hair gently, but she said it with a little sigh, “I am always glad to make you happy.”

“But, M’amie,” I said, “I must say everything I think to-night; you are not *quite* pleased. I am afraid you would have liked me to have married Mr. Berkeley, though you *were* angry at him, when I refused him—you dear old naughty M’amie,—Mr. Berkeley, for whom I did not care one straw, and you do not quite like me to marry my curly-headed sailor boy, as you call him, only because he is poor and because you don’t know where he came from. Don’t interrupt

me, M'amie," for she was going to speak. "I know it is so, and I know it is so because of love for me. You have a loyal feeling about the re-uniting of these old estates, and many a one would have forbidden me in consequence to marry as I am to do, and would have sacrificed my heart and happiness for rank and money. I have seen it in London. I know it among many of my friends. Darling M'amie, how sweet it is that *you* have brought me up, and though I have caused you all this trouble, that you have realized the nobility of goodness, and have loved Harry for his own sake."

I was still looking out of the window, and my head was still upon her knee, and her hand upon my hair, and I raised my other hand and took her old sweet white thin hand and pressed it to my lips.

"My M'amie, you have been most dear, and you can say from your heart now, can't you? that you are glad that I should be quite happy, and that you give me your blessing and approval on my marriage, and are pleased and thankful at it all? I think you know what he is," I said, as I went talking on, gazing out at the moonlight, and thinking of that sweet manly face that so lately had looked so lovingly on me,—“I think you know what *he is*, M'amie, so brave and simple, and noble, and strong and tender, and such a true servant of God, and you would rather that I married him than all the Trelor-man estates and all the dignity of a great position; surely Ferrers' blood is good enough for anyone, surely goodness—you have always told me—is the highest patent of nobility?”

I pressed and kissed her sweet old hand, and she said,—“Yes, my darling, you are right and I was wrong, and I am very *very* thankful that that dear boy loves you so, and that you are happy.”

What a saint she was! Few women brought up as she had been could have said such words!

Then was my moment of delight! “M’amie darling,” I said, “it would have all been perfect, and *you* would have been quite happy, although it would make no difference to *me*, if my marriage with Harry could only have fulfilled the old prophecy.”

“Yes, dear,” she said, “it would.”

Then I sat up and looked into her face; “M’amie, my sweet, my darling, my more than mother, you who have taught me everything and loved me so, it is so sweet to me to tell you that your wishes have come true. But, oh, I am so thankful that you and I have done what is *right* and *true* without a notion of the real facts. M’amie, my marriage with Harry *will* fulfil the prophecy.”

The dear old lady leant forward, placed both her hands upon my shoulders, and looked into my face. “Lettice, my little Lettice, I do not understand you,” she said.

“M’amie, darling, you have allowed me to love him, and you have consented to our marriage, because you are so sweet and good, and you have felt you must do what is *right*. It is not everyone, sweet M’amie, that would have done it; it is not everyone that would have so quickly their reward.” And then I clasped my hands together and looked up into her face. “M’amie, I love my Harry; I

love my 'curly-headed sailor boy,' as you called him, I love my 'waif from the waves,' as they all have named him; I would love him if I never knew where he came from, for he is the best and the dearest, and the most loyal, and the most manly, and the truest and most tender in all this world; but I am glad for your sake, my own sweet M'amie, that I *do* know now where he came from. Would you like to know who Harry is, sweet M'amie?" and I smiled as I looked at her; "there is no doubt about it, I am not talking dreams, I am not romancing, I don't care a bit for my sake, but I care for his sake and for yours—Harry is the Earl of Trelorman!"

M'amie looked at me for a moment. She had been gazing steadily at me all the time I spoke, and then she gave a little cry and fell back in her chair. I jumped up and stood by her, fearing that the shock had been too much, but she took my hands in both her hands and smiled, and said,—

"My little Lettice, I am glad; glad for his sake and for yours, and oh, so thankful that God gave me grace to love him and to feel your wisdom in loving him quite away from all my wicked, worldly thoughts. I am so ashamed of myself," she said, and she bent her head down, and I felt the hot tears come upon my hand as I stood by her chair. "Why could I not trust God?"

"You did trust Him," I said, "my M'amie, and you have had your great reward. I am older than Harry, as you know, by a year or two, and yet I feel so much younger, he is so quiet and strong. I am sure he will fill his place nobly and well, and

may God give me grace to help him ; but I love him always as my "curly-headed sailor boy," and I am so glad my M'amie loved him when he was only a 'waif from the waves.' "

And then I told her all I knew, and then she kissed and blessed me, and we parted, she as usual, sweet old saint, to spend half her night in prayer, and I to sleep the dreamless sleep of perfect happiness.

XXI.

JUST after breakfast the following morning I received a note written by Lady Trelorman herself. It was written in the shaky hand of an invalid, but was quite clear in its statement.

"Darling Lettice," she wrote, "I did not send for you to-day after you had left me, because I required all my strength for what I had to do. It was a great exertion, and I have been much exhausted, but I am feeling now unspeakable peace. I made my confession to Father Philip, and I have full confidence, since he gave me absolution, that in spite of all my terrible sins, I am at peace with God, for Father Philip is 'a godly man, who has power to bind and loose.' This morning I am very busy with the lawyers, trying to get everything settled before I go ; but you will come to me, my sweet child, this afternoon, and, if your good aunt will spare you, stay the night. How can I ever thank you for all you have done for me ? If my soul is saved, it is you who have saved it, sweet

Lettice, because you loved me even when I was doing wrong. Don't bring Markland with you to-day—I mean Trelorman; I forgot. My doctor thinks I may live another week. I shall want to see him, dear boy, to-morrow, and you will get him to forgive me, won't you, my sweet Lettice? I do so long to see you.

“Your grateful and loving

“ROSE TRELORMAN.”

What a pretty summer evening it was when I set out to the Hall! Harry did not come to the Priory that day, and I was in no way astonished, nor, indeed, did I mind; he was always so thorough in his affection, that though I missed him, and longed for him if he was not about, I now always felt what he called “the security of a great love.” I fancy Father Philip had told him how things were, and ordered him to keep away from the Priory; and as for Harry doing anything for me or any one else if Father Philip had ordered the contrary, it was simply out of the question. I have often told him his relation to Father Philip is the most perfect example of “priestcraft” that I know, and ought to be published in a Protestant tract!

I went down to see old Felix on the way, and he was full of distress at what he had heard about the sad state of “her ladyship's” health. I walked up the path by the headland and went in for a little time to the church.

There was a beautiful glow of evening sunlight, and the figures of the saints and the angels in the painted windows came out like living beings at

once in their dignity and their repose. The south door was open, and through it there came the soft sighing of the wind and the solemn song of the dreaming sea. My mind went back across all these changeful years, and my heart beat quick with thankfulness to think how we—he and I—had been guided through them all. Then above all there was the solemn and soothing sense of God's presence, and I was able to lay before Him my thoughts and hopes and desires for myself, for my beloved sailor, and, above all, for her who was nearing her end. "Casting *all* your care upon Him," came into my mind, "for He careth for you."

There are moments in life when the deepest feelings of our being and the truest thoughts of our souls assemble together and help us to some more quiet and determined purpose, stimulated by great joy or great sorrow, or far-reaching pity. Such was that moment to me. I was able for the first time fully to *take in* the change in circumstances and the responsibility of my position. I really had tried to act simply and sincerely. I really had done my best, and left everything else to God. I had had my own perplexities and my own distresses, and now, in a marvellous way, they were all clearing up. What filled my heart, however, at this moment, most of all, was the thought of that poor soul up at the Hall, whom somehow, I scarcely know how, I had loved so deeply, and who was nearing her end.

It was a pretty evening when I left the church and crossed the park. On reaching the Hall I was shown at once to her ladyship's room. She was no longer

in her armchair, she was lying in her bed propped up on pillows. The bed had been slightly moved since I was there, so that through the dip in the cliffs she might catch a glimpse of the sea. By her, on a table, was a beautiful old Spanish crucifix carved in ivory, which I had noticed in her sitting-room downstairs, and underneath it were two coloured photographs in pretty cases. The one was a copy of Sir William Durrell's *pifferaro*, and the other a likeness of myself.

When I was shown into the room the nurse left at once, and I walked straight to the bed. How sweet she looked! There was the same ivory complexion, the same pencilled eyebrows, the same mass of soft brown hair, now streaked with grey; the same large, splendid eyes of such depth of violet blue or sometimes gray, filled, as I had often noticed them, always with unshed tears; but what struck me was, that the restless look and the pain and distress in the face was gone; it was perfectly calm. I leant over her at once to kiss her, for all the love that I had had so long for that strange, sinful woman came up from my heart with a rush and filled my eyes with tears. She put her arms round me and kissed me very gently, then held my face off from hers and looked at me, and then a faint smile came over the poor, worn face.

"My beautiful little Lettice," she said—her odd affection always made her fancy I was beautiful—"you are my good angel come back to me. You have wakened me up into a different life. Ah! had I known you sooner, perhaps I might have been

a different woman. I have done all that could now be done, my darling, to undo the sinful past, and if it is undone in any measure, by the mercy of God, it has been undone through you, who have never given me up, you sweet child, and whom I had nearly injured so irretrievably, but who have taught me that repentance for a sinner is the one way of life."

I drew a chair near the bedside and put my feet upon it and sat upon the bed. I could not speak ; I realized more and more how strangely I loved her, and Harry's love and everything seemed to drift away out of my mind like the distant drift-wood of my beloved sea, and I only felt how hard it was to have to part with her.

She went on : "I am not suffering pain now, darling Lettice, I am only weak ; but my days are numbered, and I must tell you what I want while still I can. Everything is settled. I have made my last confession—my first, my last—would God it had been made long ago ; but thank God, and thank *you*, it *has* been made, and now I am at peace. Even for me there is a Saviour, and though all unworthy I have been forgiven, but this remains. Father Philip brings me the Blessed Sacrament to-morrow morning. They tell me I may live a few more days, perhaps a week. If I may, I should love that you and Trelorman—Harry, I mean—might have the Sacrament with me to-morrow. Then I think I shall have strength to tell you and to tell him *all*. I have already told you much, but not everything, and I hope—you have been so good—that you will even then forgive me, and perhaps

you will love me a little still, and perhaps, because *he* loves you, he may forgive me as Christ has."

She paused, and I gave her her medicine which she asked for. I could not speak a word, I could not trust my voice; I only leant over her and kissed her. A little shot of pain went over her face for a moment, and then she went on: "I should like to see your aunt to-morrow, if she would see me." I leant over her again and kissed her. "I do not know whether this would be possible," she added, "but I told Father Philip about it, and he said it was possible. I should like to know that you and he were married before I die." She paused for a moment, but my heart and eyes were far too full of tears to speak, and then a little twitch came over her face, and she added, "There are many pictures of beautiful countesses of Trelor-man of the past in our picture gallery, but none so beautiful as you, my child. You have saved a soul by your love and goodness; I wonder if any of them ever did!"

We sat silently for a moment or two, and then she asked me to say some prayers for her from a Prayer-book which lay beside her, which I did, and then to send her the nurse. When I was going she took my hand, and said, "Perhaps you will stay with me to-night, my darling, perhaps your aunt will allow you?" I said that M'amie would, and that I would not leave her, and that all should be as she desired, and then I left the room.

XXII.

I WENT and wrote a little note to M'amie and another to Harry, and another to Father Philip, and then I spent some evening hours in her sitting-room downstairs, telling the nurse to call me when she wished to see me. The hours crept on; it was towards ten o'clock when the nurse called me to her bedroom. I found her very peaceful and quiet, and only stayed—for nurse had told me not to stay—to say good-night; then I promised her to retire to rest.

I could not sleep at once; it was impossible; and up and down the terrace outside her sitting-room I walked, thinking of many things, chiefly of all that life of disappointment and disaster and great sin, and, above all, of the unchanging love of Him who is the "Friend of Sinners." The stars were bright, the night was still, the wind was sighing in the trees, and far across the cliffs I heard the everlasting music of the sobbing sea. I fell asleep that night in quietness and thankfulness and peace. I do not know how long I slept; at last I woke with a restless feeling and a strong desire to see the scene where those strange things had happened that first night that I stayed at Markland Hall. Throwing my dressing-gown round me, I went quietly out to the great staircase. The scene of the past came over me again, but there was no one on the staircase, though it was bright enough to see, for the light of the summer morning was pouring through the windows. Down in the great

hall, and then in the gallery the portraits of old Trelormans looked down upon me, but I imagined that their glances were kind. I passed through the library and into the little sitting-room, but the glass doors towards the terrace were not open now. I boldly opened them and gazed out into the night. There was no terrible face at the windows, no horrible laugh, no dreadful figure of an angry man. All was quite still ; but as I turned I thought I saw—was it imagination or was it fact?—the graceful figure of a woman robed in black, with a pale face so like the face I loved better than all the world, and with a crown of golden hair, and with clasped hands as once I had seen her, standing before me ; but the face had no look of anguish upon it, but a peaceful smile, and then all was gone. I was not frightened, I was not even startled, but I turned quietly and went back to my bedroom, and as I threw myself upon my bed and watched the morning light creeping slowly and peacefully through the dip of the headland across the sea, there was whispered in my ear, or I fancied that there was whispered, “He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

XXIII.

THE next morning Harry and I received the Sacrament with Lady Trelorman from the hands of Father

Philip. Harry left soon after, promising to return at the afternoon hour named by the nurse, promising also to carry a note for me to M'amie, and to ask her to be with him when he came.

We all came at the appointed time. Lady Trelorman received us with all her wonted grace and kindness—for her stately manner seemed never to desert her, even though she was propped up in bed on pillows.

"You must sit down quietly, and listen to me," she said, "that I may clear my conscience, and tell you all. Some things that I have to tell, some of you will have known ; some things you do not know, but you will understand them from what you *do* know. When I was a girl of eighteen I fell deeply in love with the late Lord Trelorman. My father, as you know, was scarcely of his rank, and he was poor. The Trelormans were angry at our engagement, and in consequence—I do not blame Lord Trelorman, and I do not enter into details—the thing was broken off ; but I loved him and he loved me, and I forgot what was right and true in any woman, and kept up my love for him to a degree which was unquestionably sinful after that, in obedience to his family, he married his first wife. At last there came years of separation, and I was utterly embittered. In pique I married Mr. Berkeley, and my son was born. I tried to devote myself to my husband, and to love my child, but I was loved by neither ; perhaps it was that that old love was always sinfully resting in my heart. Years after, as you, Miss Ferrers, know, we met in Rome, and my wicked jealousy drove me to do my best to interfere between

Lord Trelorman and his wife. I made the last years of the late Lady Trelorman's life miserable by the way in which I tried again to attract her husband's love to me. Mr. Berkeley, as you know, had died a year before that time, and Lady Trelorman died, as you will remember, and I was married to her widowed husband—to my great disgrace—very soon after her death. But I was triumphant, and my anger at the cold way in which I was received in the neighbourhood was only increased. Markland, as you remember—*your father*,” she said, turning to Harry, “lived with us for a time, but he never could endure me, and this so angered me, that knowing my ascendancy over my husband, I tried to widen the breach between the father and the son. Then came Markland's marriage with your mother,” again she said, turning to Harry, “and this infuriated his father, and I fed the flame. The boy, as you know, went to sea, and his father, who had almost entire power over his property, and literally entire power over his money, disinherited him. Your father, Sir Ralph,” she said, turning to me, “and you, Miss Ferrers,” she added, turning to my aunt, “naturally took Markland's part, and our estrangement with the Priory was complete. For long we heard nothing of Lord Markland or his wife. Then came that terrible night of the storm, from which you,” she said, turning to Harry, “were saved by Father Philip. Somehow I suspected how it was, and when, for purposes of apparent kindness, I was in the village looking after the little shipwrecked boy, I found about his neck his father's and his mother's portraits, and the records of his

own name proving his identity. These I secured. No one except a poor fisherman's wife—the wife of Felix—knew of their existence. There they are,” she added, drawing out a little gold chain with a large double locket upon it from underneath her pillow, and handing them to Harry, “They are yours, Lord Trelorman.

“*You* remember then, Miss Ferrers,” she said, turning to my aunt, “the dreadful night in which you found the body in the snow. It was—perhaps you suspected it—the body of Lady Markland—the present Lord Trelorman’s mother. While Markland, with his little son, were running round in the *Ben Venue* to Plymouth, she had come here to Markland Hall to make one last appeal to his father. She entered my sitting-room by the door which opens to the terrace, and made a touching appeal. Possibly my husband might have listened but for me ; but I was harder than a nether millstone, and goaded his lordship to order her from the house, telling her to seek help at the Priory, and appeal to the Ferrers who had been her friends. She left the room by the way she had entered, and no servant in the house ever knew she had been there. My husband pointed her out into the night, and returned to me with a sardonic laugh, saying that she was gone. You know how she met her death in the snow. I did not mean her death, poor child, I did not mean her death!” and she spoke for the first time with emotion, “but when we are hard and sinful we do not know the consequences. Since then I have never had a moment’s peace. He died, my husband, shortly after, as you know ; he had been miserably unhappy about his son’s death, for

although he never knew that he had been drowned in the *Ben Venue*, he felt convinced that he was dead. He knew that he had had a grandson, for that poor child told us so that night, but him he supposed to be dead also. He was never unkind to me, for he had always loved me, but of course, he must have felt that I had led him wrong." For a moment she paused and put her hands over her eyes.

"Yes, I had led him wrong, and I was utterly unhappy. He died—died sadly—died, I think, with such repentance as was possible, and in my misery when he was gone—for I had always loved him—I thought I could make some amends, and that my son should marry Lettice, that at least the properties should be united, which he had always desired. Edward did propose to you, Lettice, as you know, and you refused him, and you did rightly; he was quite unworthy of you. But I was angry. Everything I had done went wrong; I thought the reason was—so they whispered to me—that you had grown to love that 'Waif from the Waves,' as they called Harry. Driving along the road from Lawgan, I saw you two walk together towards the 'Island.' A demon entered into me. I felt convinced the boy would speak to you about his love, I knew it must be love, for he was strong and good and manly, and you were beautiful."

She turned painfully on her side and stretched her hands towards me. "Lettice, come here," she said, and I took both her hands. She raised herself in the bed, and gazed at me with such a longing look. "Lettice, my darling, even so near

the grave I cannot bear to lose your love, and now I fear to lose it. *I wrote that letter.* I tried to separate you from him. I cannot make excuses. There are none. It was mean and base and bad, but you have had such terrible revenge. Yes," she said, still clinging to me, "a terrible revenge, my child, you made me love you, for you loved me. Me, me, me!" she repeated, "me, the ruined and the lost, whose whole life was one vast fiasco and one wretched crime! You loved me, and Lettice, from that moment when you spoke to me so sweetly by my carriage on the little quay at Markland, I loved you as I had never loved a child before. Then I hoped that even for *me* there was hope! Can you forgive me, dear, now that you know it all? Tell me the truth, but oh! I hope you can." The yearning in her large clear eyes went through my very soul, I think it is worth all the suffering I have had that God allowed me such vast pity and such real love for her. I disengaged my hands from her hands and put my arms about her neck, and looked at her face to face and eye to eye, and only said, "Dear Lady Trelor-man, I do forgive you, and I love you," and then she sank upon the pillows, and over her sad face there came sweetness like an evening sunlight after a day of gloom, and she murmured, "It is true, then, there is a Christ!"

We were all silent for a moment. As to my dear old aunt, she had sat there with the tears slowly trickling down her cheeks. M'amie was always a saint. She was never so much angry with a sinner, or sorry with a sorrow like our Lord's. Harry had

been standing with his eyes fixed upon her, and his quiet serious face, more serious than ever, and so pitiful, for he had always that strange rough kindness of a real sailor, and he never moved. Then she raised herself a little, and in a stately, graceful way—just the old way she had when she had won my admiration somehow long ago—she held her hand out to my aunt, and said, “Miss Ferrers, I apologize, I am sorry for everything I have done that may have pained you. You have been a good woman and I a bad one. I am sorry, will you take my hand?” My dear aunt rose and clasped her hand in both of hers. “Thank you,” she said simply, and then she looked towards Harry. “My Lord Trelorman, I trust *you* will forgive me, for the sake of one you love and who has loved me! I have wronged you deeply. I have undone the wrong as far as it can be undone. All that I possess is really yours. To make all secure, I have willed it to you. I have seen the lawyers. I have settled all things. Your title to your estates and name has been established. For your father and your mother I could only pray, and I trust the Church will pray. Perhaps there are some”—and she smiled gently—“sweet Lettice is one, I think—who will pray for my poor soul?” Harry took her hand and bent over it and kissed it, and then she sank back upon her pillows.

“I have done,” she said, “you have been very kind. May God forgive me. I have been a wicked woman and a most unhappy one. If I am saved, sweet Lettice has saved me, and she will tell you the terrible visions which have haunted me these

last twelve months and what a penance I have endured."

She was utterly exhausted and I kissed her and we left the room and called the nurse to come.

From that day forward for many days I stayed at the Hall and was with her constantly. Father Philip was steady in his attendance, and she and I never spoke of these things again; we only spoke of life beyond the grave.

Her strength was greater than I had imagined, and sometimes I almost hoped, she seemed so sweet and peaceful, that she might have been spared to us, but it was not to be. She was slowly sinking, but it was strangely slow and very peaceful.

XXIV.

THINGS travelled faster than I had imagined in my seclusion at the Hall. Business men came and went. The countryside became aware that Harry's title had been established. I don't know what he did exactly. He had to go to London, and he and Father Philip were very busy about all manner of arrangements, and when I visited the Priory and saw my aunt and saw my friends among the fisher-folk in the village, I found that all the world about us was well aware that the old prophecy was about to be fulfilled, and that the curse and trouble were to end by the union of the Ferrers and Trelormans "through the sea."

I was somewhat startled about a fortnight later by

finding that all things had been arranged that we should be married quietly and at once. It could not be a gay or clamorous marriage, but it was a very happy one. Harry walked down to the church from his old home at Father Philip's, and I from the Priory with M'amie. It was she who "gave me away." The church was filled with all our fisher-folk, but no one else was there except Sir William and Lady May Durrell, from Stafferton, and Lord Ravensthorpe and Lady Dorothy. And Father Philip married us. I remember how Lady Dorothy kissed me when she had signed the register as a witness, and said in her characteristic way,—

"Well, dears, it has been a bad business and has ended well," and dear Lady May kissed me with tears in her eyes, saying only, "I am glad you trusted him, sweet Lettice, I was sure he would be true."

Harry was glad, I think, to have an excuse for not making too much fuss about our wedding. They strewed flowers in front of us, and cheered us outside the church door, and numbers of his old village friends grasped his hand and bade God bless us ; but they all felt that any festive rejoicings they might have, must come a little later.

He and I walked quietly to the Hall and stood by Lady Trelorman's bedside, and though she was very weak, she smiled a smile of perfect happiness and said that now at last she could say her *Nunc Dimittis*.

Dear M'amie had gone off to Stafferton with the Durrells, and Harry and I had the old Priory to ourselves, and every day we went about the village and walked along the cliffs and sat in our old place

in the "Island," and talked and gazed out at the sea, and I spent all the hours I could with my poor dying friend. It was just one week after our marriage that the call came, and we were with her late at night and Father Philip read the commendatory prayers and some time between the midnight and the morning, for I remember how the daylight was creeping up across the sea, she passed to her rest.

We laid her in the churchyard by her husband a few days later, and as we walked home again, and as my tears were falling, for I really had loved her, Harry said to me, "My Lettice, we will try, you and I, to do all the good we can, and undo all the wrong that has been done so far as may be. Your love, my little sweetheart, has changed everything and saved one soul, now you will try and save another, won't you? and help *me*, for love of *you*, to do my duty."

"My darling!" I could only answer, "it is love of you that has helped me to do anything right that I have done, if ever I have done right."

Then the winds seemed to sing my thoughts in mystic language, and the waves of our beloved sea seemed to join in sighing out all we felt but could not say. The blessing had come. The curse was gone; and the blessing has never left us since, but has grown in power and helpfulness to me and others, and all from *him*—my childhood's friend, my loyal lover, my darling husband, my "Waif from the Waves."

